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# THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,110

MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 1996

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PRIESTLEY

## Blair seeks to break the mould

### Bid to end decade of political stalemate

Tony Blair has decided to try to break the mould of British politics and is promoting alliances in the hope that left-wing Tories, as well as the Liberal Democrats, would back a Labour government programme in the Commons.

Even if Labour won a clear-cut majority over all other parties, the Labour leader would want to encourage the support of MPs from other parties on specific issues like Europe, Ireland, education and health. His drive for political realignment reflects changes sought by some on the left in the decade since the *Independent* was launched - such as the ill-fated SDP.

The anxiety of moderate Tories about the direction their party is taking on Europe will be aggravated by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, who today opens up a startlingly Thatcherite attack on "the socialist virus" of Europe.

Mr Lang, who is by no means seen as one of the Cabinet Euro-skeptics, told the *Independent* that the "national cultures" of Germany and France were anti-competitive; he "fervently resented" the way in which Brussels tried to meddle in British business; and he said some EU partners were "tying

Anthony Bevins

their economies in knots". In an effort to prepare for the single currency, but it was his remark about Brussels-inspired socialism that will hearten Tory Euro-skeptics, and perturb Sir Edward Heath and other grandees, on the eve of the annual conference in Bournemouth.

Mr Lang, who is seen as a dark-horse contender for the succession to John Major, said it seemed Labour's only commitment was to the "agenda of the socialist virus that is creeping across Europe, that seeks to intrude into Britain through the social chapter, the national minimum wage, through the working time directive, and all those measures".

The attack follows a Saturday of calculated snubs and built-up tension between Mr Major and other European leaders at the Dublin summit.

Although the Prime Minister has stuck faithfully to the Cabinet line of the single currency, keeping open the option of eventual entry while actively engaged in negotiations for the critical terms of its creation, an atmosphere of cold hostility was being generated by Mr Major and Mr Lang towards the

direction being taken by the EU. While that might just take the edge off the Euro-sceptic attacks expected at Bournemouth, One Nation moderates were perplexed by Mr Lang's vituperation.

One Conservative MP said: "When even nice people like Lang start talking like this, you begin to think it is being driven by desperation; they feel the ship is sinking and the anti-European card is the only card they feel they have left."

Certainly, there are a number of Conservative MPs who would support a Labour government on Europe, just as the Liberal Democrats supported the Conservative Government on Maastricht. It was pointed out by a leading Conservative backbencher that Labour MPs had backed the Heath government over Europe in 1971, after Common Market entry had been negotiated, and a number of Tory MPs would similarly return the favour to Labour.

Labour sources added that Old Labour-New Labour were not split on that score - John Prescott and other left-wingers had backed the Lib-Lab pact which sustained the Callaghan government in the late 1970s.

But some nervous Tories said that *ad hoc* support on differ-



The first edition of *The Independent*, 7 October 1986

## Ten years on - anniversary issue

**D**reaming is flying; the economics trudges along below. *The Independent's* first decade has been lived trying to reconcile the founders' dream of a truly independent, free-thinking and radical newspaper with the dour, and sometimes mad economics of the British press. Throughout, our journalism has won us praise and imitation. Throughout, we have been a small newspaper, surviving on our wits in a market dominated by much richer rivals.

To the decades ahead, we confidently predict that neither of these things will change. It would have been so much more convenient for so many big players - Rupert Murdoch, for instance, and the party hierarchies who like the press predictably bundled up in red and blue - for *The Independent* to have quietly crumbled. But we have survived and are growing again, despite Murdoch's price war because there is such a thing as an *Independent* reader.

It is dangerously easy to talk rubbish about newspaper readerships. But you, the people responsible for our existence, seem to us to be sceptical, intelligent, hungry for argument and information, suspicious of conventional wisdom; a wary and insubordinate regiment of modern Britons. So thank you for that; as soon as you become easier to please, this newspaper has lost its purpose.

We were born into a Britain in some ways very similar to today's; our early editions were much

concerned with Tory battles over Europe, for instance. In other ways, it was remarkably different. The high noon of Thatcherite self-confidence was blazing and the Soviet empire was intact. In that world, we were independent of political parties because we have an agenda of our own. We were worried about the condition of British democracy. We were pro-European. We didn't think that any of the parties matched our concerns. We still don't.

We were also independent of press barons. Today, we are largely owned by two newspaper groups, the Mirror Group and Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers. But the editor of *The Independent* remains that rare and happy soul - a journalist without a proprietor whispering political demands in his ear. We have been through tough times - but in these vital ways, our dream has not been grounded.

Many things have changed of course: we have gone into colour; our leading columnists today are as likely to be women as men; we are, very slowly, developing a sense of humour. Some readers don't like changes but most would be surprised if we didn't constantly try to improve.

It has been a turbulent and exhilarating journey so far. During it we have tried to keep faith with you, to be an honest and decent newspaper. Thank you for keeping faith with us.

Andrew Marr

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## Angels get a rocket from Hell

Michael Streeter

A biker's war simmering across Northern Europe between two rival gangs exploded into full-scale conflict yesterday when two people at a Hell's Angels party were killed by an anti-tank grenade.

The missile smashed on to the roof of the bikers' heavily-fortified Copenhagen headquarters at about 3am local time yesterday, injuring 15 people, some seriously, as 150 guests enjoyed their annual "Viking" party.

Suspicion immediately fell on the Hell's Angels' bitter ri-

vals, the Bandidos. This gang, based in Texas, and the Angels, whose world HQ is in California, have been involved in a deadly feud in the Nordic countries for more than two years.

Police believe the fight is over drugs and criminal markets, but whatever the cause it has now claimed nine lives and 45 people have been injured across Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway.

The battles have increasingly moved from the countryside into the towns, and took a sinister twist following a recent raid on a Swedish army depot. Since

then there have been three grenade attacks on Hell's Angels clubhouses in Sweden, leading up to yesterday's fatal attack.

One of the victims was thought to have been 29-year-old Janne Krohn, a woman with no known connections with the gang, who was at the party because the Angels wanted to improve their image by opening the event up to neighbours.

"We don't know precisely why she joined the party. She may have reacted to the posters," said police commissioner Ove Dahl. The other person killed was 39-year-old Louis

Linde Nielsen, whom police said was being considered for membership of the gang. Among the injured were Hell's Angels' Danish president, Christian Middelboe.

The scene after the blast, in which many injuries were caused by flying shrapnel, was chaotic. The stench of burning rubber hung in the air.

"The idiots got us," screamed one biker as he stormed through a crowd that gathered near the compound.

There was swift political condemnation of the outrage. Prime Minister Poul Nyrup

Rasmussen said the attack was "abominable".

But the tragedy is unlikely to improve the Danish authorities' relations with the biker gang. In September, Copenhagen's mayor ordered the Hell's Angels evicted from their headquarters, which the gang rents from the city under a law providing low-cost leases to clubs and civic organisations. The gang has refused to leave.

The government is considering taking action against all biker groups and the topic was a major talking point when the Parliament met last week.

### QUICKLY

**McAlpine moves over**  
Tory embarrassment at the party's splits over Europe increased last night with the announcement that Lord McAlpine, an ex-treasurer and deputy chairman of the party, was joining Sir James Goldsmith's independent Referendum Party. Page 2

**Middle East talks**  
The US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, went to the Palestinian-Israeli talks, which started yesterday, with the US suspicious that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, will use them to stall on a withdrawal from Hebron. Page 9

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But pro-European backbencher Peter Luff said: "I am very disappointed that Lord McAlpine should fall for Sir James Goldsmith's blandishments. The Referendum Party is wrong to try and force a referendum. But the real danger is if rich men think they can push their own political agenda by forming a bogus political party."



Photograph: Emma Boardman

# Councils pressure Tories to drop nursery vouchers

Leading article, page 17

# MoD warned four times about dangers of Gulf war pesticides

It has also emerged that a team of scientists with acknowledged expertise in the subject applied for MoD funds in August to carry out further research – but were turned down by the Medical Research Council without explanation.



Dr Jamal also said his institute and the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh had applied to the MRC in August this year for MoD funding for research into the impact of OPs and other chemicals on soldiers, but were turned down.

# Hamilton row is 'poisoning politics'

Sir Geoffrey, who is now a member of the new Standards and Privileges Committee, told yesterday's BBC radio's *World This Weekend* that there had been no "blocking mechanism". That, he said, was "ludicrous". But Mr Ashdown told the same programme that while he had absolute trust and confidence in Sir Gordon, "it doesn't matter how good the person is, if the procedures have in the past been tainted and we are to use the same procedures again".

Two ticket-holders share this week's National Lottery jackpot of £10.9m, and 23 others win £145,543 each for matching five numbers and the bonus ball. The winning numbers were 47, 45, 9, 48, 6 and 25, bonus number 14.

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PHONO 12



# The last great challenge on earth: but will the best man win?



Grounded: Roger Mear at home in Derbyshire with some of the gear provided by sponsors Photograph: Steve Forrest/Guzelian; Mear on a previous expedition (centre) and Sir Ranulph Fiennes (right), all set for his assault on the ice continent

CHARLES ARTHUR

## Antarctic adventurer left at the starting gate as sponsors melt away

It is one of the last great challenges left to man—a challenge that fires the imagination of buccannery explorers and has also fuelled a battle for big company sponsorship.

The goal is to become the first man to achieve a solo crossing of the frozen wastes of Antarctica and if only Roger Mear's vacuum cleaner had broken down earlier this year, he might be the one going to the Antarctic in a week's time.

Instead, the veteran explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes—whose purchase of a new vacuum cleaner last January indirectly led to £150,000 of sponsorship—will be heading south to Punt

ta Arenas, the world's most southerly airfield, later this month to attempt to be the first person to cross the frozen continent solo.

Sir Ranulph says he "doesn't approve" of solo expeditions—but that is what the record demands. Mr Mear, though, is entirely prepared for a solo trek, as he has tried it before.

Last December, Mr Mear, 46, was forced to abandon an attempt to walk the 1,800 miles across Antarctica after only 43 days, when problems developed on the sledge he had towed for 500 miles with his provisions, clothing and tent.

After a year's work, the sledge should now fulfil its task perfectly. But it, and Mr Mear, will have to stay at home in Derbyshire, unless he can find £100,000 of sponsorship in the next seven days. "It will be a little bit of a disappointment if I can't go," he said, with typical understatement, last week.

Sir Ranulph, 53, is quick to admit that his place on the flight south is due as much to luck as determination. "I have a folder of refusals as thick as your arm from companies," he said. But he does have one crucial supporter.

His sponsor for the expedi-

tion is Dyson Vacuum, based in Malmesbury, Wiltshire. "Our old vacuum cleaner broke down in January, so my wife sent me out to buy a new one. The man in the shop told me to spend the extra money on a Dyson. And I noticed a booklet which talked about James Dyson, the owner of the company, who is also an inventor."

He called Mr Dyson, arranged a meeting, and eight hours after the two men met in January, had a sponsor for his expedition. However, Sir Ranulph did not announce his plan until the beginning of this month.

Mr Mear, though, has found sponsors surprisingly slow to back him. Last year, he had the support of Sainsbury's, Continental Tyres, the Internet company Planet Online, two water boards, and Kwik Fit.

This year, only Sainsbury's has returned—which at least means he has all the food he needs for a crossing. "I'm sitting here surrounded by 110 days worth of vacuum-packed rations hoping that I will be going down there," he said.

The problems have intensified since last week. "Ranulph hasn't been poaching my sponsors or anything, but since he an-

nounced his plans some of the people I had been talking to have decided they don't want to sponsor me. That leaves me without enough money to get down there." He is still talking, though, to a couple of companies who might be forthcoming.

He plans to use a specially-designed kite to help drag the sledge, which he succeeded in using last year.

Sir Ranulph, by contrast, finds kites "like trying to learn windsurfing, only harder." Practice sessions had led to him almost being dragged on to a motorway and entangling the kites in a barbed-wire fence. "I

think I'll use something called an mpski, which is a type of sail that I used when I crossed the Antarctic with Mike Stood," he said. "The only problem is that you get extremely cold hands."

Whoever does win the race to be first across the continent, Mr Mear believes that the Antarctic could in time be the new Mount Everest—a challenge accessible to anyone prepared to pay for it.

"We're at the dawn of a new age because of kite technology," he said. "Just as better support and oxygen made Everest feasible, I think the Antarctic will become open to the majority of people who can afford it. I think polar travel will be there for those who want it."

Just as better support and oxygen made Everest feasible, I think the Antarctic will become open to the majority of people who can afford it

## Dear Woo, My dear Nancy; a trove of letters comes to light

JAMES CUSICK

Rock 'n' roll and the Suez crisis were just round the corner. But in the fading days of Britain's empire letters written by two of the country's best-known novelists show high society refused to let the old ways and the old days go peacefully.

The Letters of Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh, to be published later this month, reveal an often unconscious hilarity in the pair's attitude to the changing post-war world. While the rest of Britain was struggling with the after-effects of six years of war, Waugh—the writer who cruelly satirised English society while at the same time being deeply in love with it—seemed to be struggling on £10,000 a year and worrying that he may have to sack all his five servants.

The new volume—extracts of which are published in the latest issue of *Harpers & Queen* magazine—adds to the insights revealed in an earlier batch of published correspondence. Writing from his Gloucestershire home to Nancy Mitford in Paris in 1952, he complains: "I am sacking all the servants (five does seem rather a lot to look after Laura and me in a house the size of a boot)." He bleats of a future life where he will "never wear a clean collar again or subscribe to the Royal Lifeboat fund".

Nancy Mitford, one of the six Mitford sisters who seemed to find an influential niche in every movement of the 20th century from Fascism to communism, had just published her novel *Love in a Cold Climate*. Regarded as a socialist, these letters neverthe-



Wordsmiths: Waugh (left) and Mitford compared notes on the post-war struggle to keep up the old ways of living



less reveal her fondness for the old regime and the fading comforts of the aristocracy. Whether in jest or reality she found a sadness in her correspondent's plight. "Darling Evelyn, life without servants is not worth living—better cut down in any other way."

For the best part of two decades the pair lived on opposite sides of the channel and exchanged more than 500 letters. Wit, gossip and a sharp wordsmith's knife stabbed into the heart of those they disliked, dominate the letters. The fashionable Paris contrasts with Waugh's flirtation with the English upper-class and his constant penurious complaining of not being able to keep up. The cast of the correspondence include Lady Diana Cooper, the critic

Cyril Connolly, the novelist Graham Greene and the fertile arena of her family including her sisters Lady Mosley and the Duchess of Devonshire.

In one letter, just after *Love in a Cold Climate* had been greeted with critical acclaim, Waugh wrote "I was wrong in thinking publication would blight your career. Congratulations on your good sense at not being put by my ill-considered criticism."

In the early Fifties Waugh too was carving his literary reputation. In August 1951 he wrote to Nancy admitting what his son, Auberon, has always maintained, that his father was far from an ideal parent. "I have been at home pegging away at my novel and associating with my children whose interests I do not

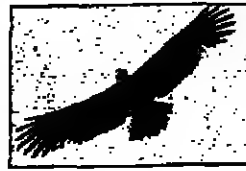
share." His cook is on holiday and his "manservant" had "taken to his bed". His house guests, he predicts, "will have poor entertainment". There is always room for complaint. "My poverty is irksome." He confides that an American publisher is suing him for \$3000 and he cannot pay. "So I must go to prison." He never went to prison.

In early 1952 their letters argue the merits of living in England or France. Nancy asks: "Is England really the England of Shakespeare. Is Germany that of Goethe?" By 1955, they were arguing over the merits of the upper class and the emerging middle classes. "My mother-in-law believes it middle-class to decant claret. Lord Beauchamp thought it m.c. not to decant champagne (into jugs)." Waugh is keen to ensure his children use bicycle instead of bike.

Despite her early literary success, Nancy would die in Paris, apparently dejected. Throughout the late Fifties and early Sixties, she wrote to Waugh, a Roman Catholic in his later life, about what happened after death. "If we go to heaven first, then have the resurrection of the body and then have the court martial and then go to hell, that seems awfully disappointing."

Waugh, seemingly confident about the nature of the after-life, still worries about pending financial matters. "I am having a grievous time with weddings. A daughter last week, a son at the end of the month. Most fatiguing and costly."

The Letters of Nancy Mitford Evelyn Waugh, edited by Charlotte Mosley, published by Hodder & Stoughton on 17 October



How the fascists took a turning down the wrong street. Page 4

# mel-last back.\*

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news

# Scientologists hunt for recruits inside prison

IAN BURRELL

Scientology, the fashionable cult practised by Tom Cruise, John Travolta and other Hollywood stars, has now turned its attentions to inmates of Britain's prisons.

The Scientologists are persuading prisoners to take courses in the teachings of the late Scientology guru L Ron Hubbard. The inmates complete question papers in their cells and send them to the Church of Scientology for marking.

Prison officers and prison reform groups are alarmed at the development, which comes at a time when prison rehabilitation programmes are being cut back.

Stephen Shaw, director of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "Prisoners are often vulnerable to the promises of cult religions. Everyone has a right to practise their beliefs but the Home Office must make sure that Scientologists are not using prisons as a recruiting ground."

Nico van den Berg, a Dutch lawyer who has set up the Scientologists' Criminoo UK project said that 16 prisoners, in five jails, were undergoing the programme.

He said that it was intended to expand the scheme next year

with Criminoo volunteers going into prisons to take rehabilitation classes.

Mr Van den Berg added: "Once we become bigger we can actually go into prisons which might adopt the course as an official programme which all prisoners go through."

He said that Criminoo was not seeking to recruit the inmates to Scientology but merely trying to turn them away from criminality by introducing them to *The Way to Happiness*, Hubbard's secular teachings on clean living.

The suggestion was greeted with suspicion by rehabilitation professionals. Harry Fletcher, deputy general sec-

retary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "There are now 57,000 people in prison, many of whom are desperate to change their lives. You can see why the Scientologists would see this as a fertile recruiting ground. This is one service we could do without."

Other critics have been more damning, suggesting that Scientology is a dangerous cult which uses brain-washing techniques on its followers.

In a 1984 High Court judgment, Mr Justice Lane, described Scientology as "corrupt, sinister and dangerous" and "grimly reminiscent of the ranting and bullying of Hitler and his henchmen."

The cult is now developing an altogether different public image thanks partly to the way it has been embraced in Hollywood.

Travolta's last film, *Phenomenon*, has been described by some critics as a thinly-disguised piece of propaganda for Scientology, which claims to have 8 million members worldwide.

Meanwhile senior prison service sources said that Lord McNair, the Liberal peer, was lobbying Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, to allow Sci-



John Travolta: *Phenomenon* 'thinly-disguised propaganda'



Bad memories: Leon Greenman, a survivor of Auschwitz, recalls the fascists' presence in the 1930s in London's East End. Photograph: Ralph Erle

## Fascists who took a wrong turning

CHARLIE BAIN

On the morning of 4 October 1936, Kathleen and Alice Pingel-Holmes, dressed in their Sunday best, began erecting a barricade in Cable Street in an attempt to stop Sir Oswald Mosley and his 4,000 Blackshirts

marching through London's East End. Breaking into a nearby builders' yard, they dragged out bricks, ladders and plants of wood and positioned them across the road. Within minutes mounted police had arrived, raised their batons and then charged at the resolute mob.

The infamous Battle of Cable Street had begun. It was not until later in the afternoon that the commissioner of police told Mosley that his officers had failed to clear a path through more than 100,000 protesters and that he would have to tell his fascist troops to go home.

Yesterday, the two sisters, now in their seventies and early eighties, recalled the day with a mixture of pride and disdain. "The police were very cruel and brutal that day and there were a lot of injuries," said Alice, 81, speaking at a march and rally organised by Tower Hamlets Trades Council to mark the 60th anniversary of the battle.

She said: "The police just charged at us with their batons swinging, cutting people down in their path. I've got this very vivid image of a man who used to ride around the East End in a cart selling winkles - he was picking up the wounded and ferrying them to the local hospital. There was this terrific feeling of comradeship. We, the dockers, the Irish, the Jews, whoever, were stopping the fascists from marching on the East End."

The resistance to Mosley that day had been organised mainly by the communists, with the Independent Labour Party and various Jewish organisations, but joining in the battle were tens of thousands of local people determined to defend the East End from the onslaught of fascism.

"It wasn't a question of politics at all," said Alice, "it was the people who simply were not going to have the fascists march



Rallying tune: a member of London's Asian community joins in the anti-fascism commemorations. Photograph: Ralph Erle

on their territory." As the police charged, the East Enders threw bottles, stones, chair-legs and even marbles into the paths of the approaching horses. One veteran said he even saw men lobbing balls of barbed wire at the police. Chalked on the pavements was the famous phrase the resistance had adopted - "They shall not pass" - translated from the slogan "no pasaran" of the republican Spanish who began the defence of Madrid against General Franco that day.

Standing on the steps of St George's Town Hall in Cable Street yesterday was Labour's home affairs spokesperson, Jack Shaw, one of 150 people arrested and taken to Leman Street police station for questioning that day 60 years ago. Jack, 79, a former machinist,

returned to his home near Commercial Road a bruised and battered man after being given what he calls a "thorough hiding" by plain-clothed police.

Yesterday's march was also a pledge by local residents, trade unionists and anti-racist groups to stand up to Mosley's political successors. With continuing racist attacks in the area and talk of the British National Party putting up 50 candidates in Bromley Bow, Stepney, Whitechapel and other parts of Tower Hamlets in the coming general election, many feel they may once again have to battle against the extreme right.

As one Cable Street veteran put it: "The similarity between the plight of the Jews in the 1930s and the attacks today on Asian community here, is all too close to home."

## Naked Ape man told to cut sex

The zoologist Desmond Morris said yesterday that he had cut scenes of homosexuals cruising the streets and prostitutes having sexual intercourse with clients from his new BBC series after TV bosses warned him they would be offensive to viewers, writes Charlie Bain.

Mr Morris's last BBC series, *The Human Animal*, caused controversy when it showed intimate moments of a couple during orgasm.

The follow-up, *The Opposite Sex*, was to have used footage of sexual promiscuity to throw light on the study of sexual relationships between men and women. However, BBC executives warned him that the scenes would have to be cut from versions to be sold in many less sexually liberated countries.

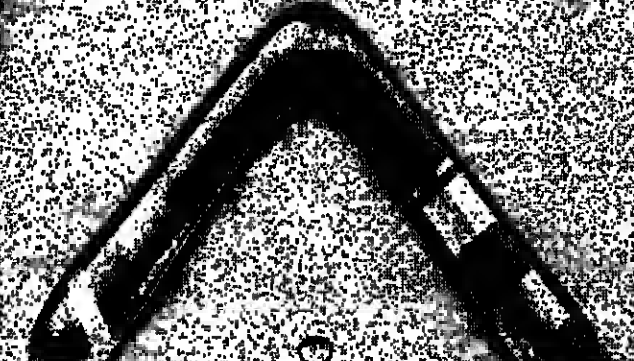
The zoologist, who rose to fame with his book *The Naked Ape*, which analyses the behaviour of humans as if they were animals, decided to tone down the series, and will concentrate on the archaeological remains of a 2,500-year-old brothel at Ephesus in Turkey to show that some men's need for emotionless "sexual relief" was centuries old and not a new phenomenon.

Mr Morris said the scenes being cut formed only a "tiny" percentage of the series. "It is not about sexual relationships but about the relationship between men and women, what it is to be male and female or masculine and feminine, and how the two sexes relate - and are related - to one another," said Mr Morris.

The series is set to be shown in Britain in autumn next year.



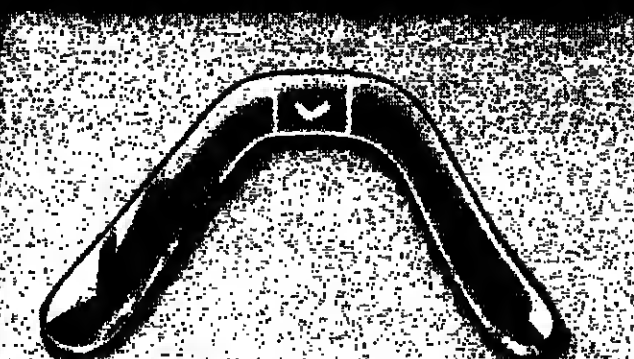
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## Only a tiny bat can save these 200-year-old trees from the axe



Public danger or valuable wildlife refuge? Despite local objections, the ailing Rusland beeches could be felled by the year-end Photograph: Will Walker

STEPHEN GOODWIN

The leaves are starting to turn on the Rusland Beeches for probably the last time. One of the autumnal glories of southern Lakeland, the 200-year-old stand of trees is due to be felled before the year's end.

With considerable reluctance, the Lake District National Park has decided that all 54 beeches should be felled. A study by Derek Patch, director of the Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service, found many to be in "a dangerous condition" and others to be in declining health.

But a vigorous locally-based campaign to save the beeches has been fought through the summer. Contrary opinions have been voiced by other tree specialists, and some 3,500 people have signed a "save the beeches" petition.

The most likely saviours at the moment are the noctule bats which inhabit at least seven of the trees. As a last resort campaigners are prepared to take to the tree tops. Felling is on hold until the park board has received the approval of English Nature about the bats, and of the Department of the Environment - which has the final word since the trees are covered by a preservation order.

Using a hydraulic lift and an instrument for looking round bends, park staff found the bats in five of the trees and telltale signs in two others. Not all the trees could be surveyed. The

most populous roost contained 18 noctule bats. The noctule is one of the largest British species, weighing about one ounce. It is not common in Cumbria, and only about 10 roosts are known elsewhere in the county.

To compound the park's dilemma, the seven trees with bats are the very ones identified by Dr Patch as being the most dangerous - the bats have been homing in on the rotten wood. Neighbouring trees might also have to be spared as they form

**'The most likely saviours are the noctule bats which inhabit at least seven of the trees'**

part of the micro-environment of the roosts. The beeches are on sloping ground beside a lane running up the Rusland Valley. Planted in the late 1700s, at around the time of the building of Rusland Hall, there were originally about 120 trees, but over the past 40 years decay has led to many being felled.

In the 1950s, the land was leased by the Friends of the Lake District to prevent it being sold to the timber-hungry forestry industry. Then in 1976

the lease, and the headache over the trees' future, passed to the park authority.

The AAIS survey concluded that 26 of the 54 remaining trees were sufficiently dangerous to require felling as soon as possible and that most of the others needed substantial surgery. But Marianne Bennett, co-ordinator of the Campaign to Save Rusland Beeches, said that the park had "over-reacted". She has recruited arboriculturalists who maintain that only a few trees need be felled.

"Any tree at the side of a road is a potential hazard. But the risk is very slight and it can be monitored," said Ms Bennett, a wildlife artist who lives 20 minutes' drive from the beeches, at Milnthorpe. "The beeches are an absolutely fantastic landscape feature and part of our heritage. We don't want to see the whole lot felled and if it comes to it there are people willing to sit up in the trees."

Ms Bennett is not impressed by the park's £9,600 plan to replace the informal stand with an avenue of 120 new beeches. "They seem to want a national park which is all neat and tidy."

The board admit the decision has been "difficult". Officials are understood to be divided over wholesale felling, and work is continuing on alternative action. The Friends of the Lake District has, with a heavy heart, gone along with the park's judgement. But many of the charity's members will be quietly rooting for the bats.

## Infected blood victims to fight on for funds

MICHAEL STREETER

Campaigners representing haemophiliacs, who contracted Hepatitis C from infected blood, have vowed to carry on the campaign for compensation despite a blunt refusal by the Department of Health to award funds. Health minister John Horgan, has written to the Haemophilia Society saying that it "would not be appropriate" for the Government to offer financial help.

Despite this, about 260 MPs from all parties have signed an Early Day Motion backing financial help for haemophiliacs infected with the virus.

As *The Independent* first revealed, about 3,100 people were infected during the 1980s when they were given untreated batches of a blood-clotting agent called Factor VIII. It is thought that 60 sufferers have died after being exposed to the virus that causes cirrhosis of the liver and can lead to cancer.

Victims of the treatment claimed that the health service had a moral duty to help them, but after a lengthy consultation process Mr Horgan refused to accept the hurdle. His letter adds: "We do not accept that there has been negligence on

the part of the NHS... Tragic though it is that the very treatment designed to help those patients infected, should have caused them harm, there can be no question that they received the best treatment at the time. That treatment was essential for their survival."

The Department of Health is worried that making payments now on the basis of "non-negligent" harm would open the floodgates to many no-fault compensation claims.

The refusal to pay out was condemned by the Society. The chairman, the Rev Prebendary Alan Tanner, said: "It is simply not good enough for the Government to wash its hands of the situation and provide no financial help to those infected with Hepatitis C. We will not let this matter rest... people are suffering and dying as a result of this virus contracted through NHS treatment. We have widespread parliamentary support for our cause and we will vigorously campaign for financial help for those infected and their dependants."

The Haemophilia Society said it sought recompense on compassionate grounds, claiming that compensation should take the form of goodwill

payments. They contrasted the Government's handling of them compared with the treatment received by HIV sufferers who were infected after receiving NHS blood. In the HIV cases, money was accepted on the basis that NHS resources for patient care would not be hit by an escalating compensation bill. Mr Tanner said they also thought Mr Horgan was ignoring their call for new and safer treatments for haemophiliacs that could help prevent similar tragedies. "This short-sighted approach from the Government to the provision of the safest treatment, means the possibility still remains of people with haemophilia being infected by blood-borne viruses through their NHS treatment."

The virus, formerly known as non-A or non-B Hepatitis, was only identified at the end of the Eighties. It is thought that between 50 and 80 per cent of people infected will develop serious liver complaints, which, in some cases, will lead to cirrhosis and cancer. There is no vaccine, which means the disease can be passed to other members of a sufferer's household. Studies suggest Interferon Alpha, the only available treatment, is effective only in some cases.

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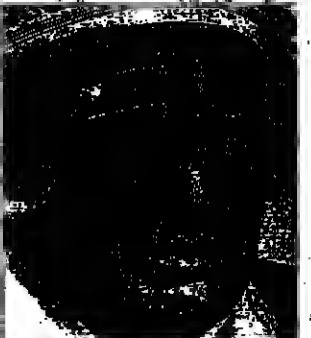
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## The Pope prays for end to Ulster conflict

The Pope yesterday urged all sides in Northern Ireland to look to a brighter future. "Nothing is lost through peace, but everything can be lost through violence," he told Irish pilgrims in Rome just hours before going into hospital to face his sixth surgical operation in 15 years. Amid fearsomely tight security, the 76-year-old pontiff was taken from the Vatican to the nearby Gemelli hospital. He is due to be operated on Tuesday and is expected to be back in his own apartments within a week. According to official bulletins, the Pope will have his appendix removed. However, given his history of intestinal trouble since the shooting that almost killed him in 1981, few Vaticanologists or medical experts believe the problem is simple appendicitis.

In a fresh plea for an end to the differences, Pope John Paul said: "Let us all pray that the Irish people will put tension and conflict behind them and go on to build a brighter and more serene future for the future generation." Yesterday, hours after the John Major admitted that the peace process was bogged down, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh Dr Robin Eames warned that time was



Pope John Paul: Plea for a brighter, more serene future

running out for the politicians. Tomorrow a Progressive Unionist Party delegation is expected to meet loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force prisoners at the Maze to discuss the future of the peace process. Paramilitaries from the Protestant Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters at the jail have already withdrawn their support because of the lack of progress and the failure of Sinn Féin and the IRA to commit themselves to non-violence.

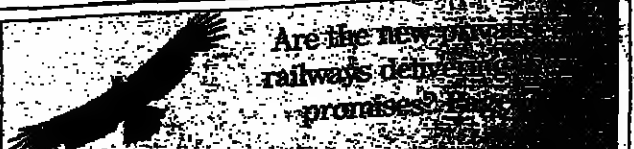
With the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, at the United States economic

conference on Northern Ireland in Pittsburgh, no significant political movement is likely this week. But growing unease among the loyalist paramilitaries which threatens their own two-year truce is causing increasing anxiety.

The talks at Stormont also risk being brought to a halt by Ulster Unionist demands for a start to IRA disarmament before Sinn Féin can enter substantive negotiations on the future of Northern Ireland and their objections to proposals on how handle the issue of weapons decommissioning.

Archbishop Eames said a restoration of the IRA ceasefire would be the single most important step towards the building of trust. He said on BBC Radio Ulster: "I am aware and as conscious as anyone of the difficulties and problems individuals are facing, but I have to say time is not on our side."

Mr Major had a brief informal discussion with the Irish Prime Minister John Bruton on the fringes of an European Union meeting in Dublin yesterday where both men urged the Ulster parties to move from their entrenched positions. The Prime Minister said of the peace process: "It has got bogged down, yes. But because it is bogged down it is a period does not mean it is dead. Progress has not been as remotely as rapid as we would have liked. I am a veteran of being told the peace process is dead. I don't believe it."



Are the new railways being promised?



## news

The President of the Board of Trade has been tipped as a candidate for the Tory leadership. **Anthony Bevins** interviews **Ian Lang**.

# A modest political proposal from the man who would be king

Privatised utility "fat cats", who have made a killing from large-scale share-option packages and other perks are defended by **Ian Lang**, President of the Board of Trade, in an interview today.

He said their success had turned nationalised industries that used to cost the taxpayer £50m a week into companies that generated weekly tax revenues of £60m for the Exchequer.

"That is diminishing the burden on taxpayers, and it helps to pay for health and education," Mr Lang added.

"Nobody can justify unwarranted gain, be it in share options or salary, or whatever," he said. But then said quite clearly that the privatised utility bosses deserved their gains - with an uncompromising free-market justification for the bonanza pay and perks that have followed privatisation.

"Companies which were inefficient, unproductive, under-invested, in the public sector are now transformed," he said. "And the reason that those individuals who steered them from their inefficient state control to their new success in private ownership, the reason they are doing so well out of it is that they have so dramatically raised the productivity, performance and the profitability of their companies that the stock markets raised the value of their shares."

Mr Lang, whose political profile has been deliberately raised by the Prime Minister - giving him lead responsibility for industrial relations and the



Ian Lang: Promises action on strikes in the public utilities, where 'holding the public to ransom' will not be tolerated

Photograph: Tom Pison

minimum wage at the expense of Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment - is increasingly seen as a middle-ground contender for an eventual succession to John Major. Certainly, his low profile and his non-alignment

with the Eurosceptic right and the Heathite left, could help.

Told he was seen as a future leader, Mr Lang said: "Along with about 300 others. My ambition is confined to doing the job in hand as well as I can, to seeing my party continuing to prosper and to remain in government."

As for the job in hand, with industrial relations and the minimum wage as prime targets for election campaign attacks on Labour, Mr Lang said action would be taken on public-utility strikes and a minimum wage would cost a million jobs.

He said he would not tolerate the public being "held to ransom" by striking public-service workers. The number of days lost through strikes was a 20th of what it was in the Seventies, but he said: "There are still those areas where we see

this ugly echo of Seventies trade-union man coming through, and we are developing ways to address them."

The minimum wage, he said, was an easy clap net at a Labour conference and it would make everybody feel better for a day and a half. But he added: "You then have thousands of jobs disappearing from the workforce, particularly at the low-paid, and unskilled and young end of the workforce."

That is why, if you look at the unemployment rates among young people in France, Spain, Belgium, you find they are dramatically higher than they are in this country."

Asked whether it was right that the taxpayers should have to pay more than £4bn a year subsidising low-pay employers - through income support for

their workers - Mr Lang said: "It would cost the taxpayers a hell of a lot more if they have to pay unemployment benefit to a million more people."

Mr Lang's attack on Labour extended to educational standards. After 17 years in office, he said: "Any Conservative government prosecuting its education policies has to fight through the morass of Labour-controlled authorities." It was Tony Blair, he said, who had thus "made a mess of it". However, he conceded that Conservative change in education "hasn't yet delivered results".

There had been a dramatic increase in the number of students going into higher education, and in the numbers getting good A-level grades. "For good pupils, education standards have been rising." But he

added: "There remain areas of attention. Gillian Shephard, I know, is looking very closely at the kind of issues that can build on what we have done; more classroom teaching, to get more focus on the fundamentals."

As *The Independent* revealed last month, Mrs Shephard is expected to announce an enhanced workforce programme at this week's Conservative Party conference in Bournemouth, and Mr Lang gave that his full support in *The Independent's* interview. Workfare had "a part to play" in tackling unemployment, he said. "What is important is that the social security system should not be designed to maintain people in supported isolation but should find routes back in employment, into productive, self-sustaining activity as quickly as possible."

## Duper of Dunblane families still at large

MICHAEL STREETER

The man who duped families of children killed in the Dunblane massacre over an anti-gun charity may never be prosecuted.

Convicted fraudster William Bernson, provoked public outrage when it was revealed that he had involved the unwitting families in his Society Against Guns in Europe (SAGE) without revealing his criminal record, and after lying about his name and background.

Police and the Charity Commission immediately launched investigations into the charity, which had used photographs of Dunblane victim Emily Crozier in an emotive advertising campaign to ban all handguns. But now Essex police admit

that, while the inquiry is continuing, they have not spoken to him - and have no plans to pursue Bernson to his new address in the Netherlands.

Detective Inspector Roy Fenning, of the force's fraud squad, told *The Independent*: "We do not have the resources to go around after everyone. We are not going to be calling on him while he is in Holland. If he returns, he will be spoken to."

DI Fenning said that while they appreciated the emotions involved, the alleged offence for which they wanted to question Bernson was "quite minor". The woman, who ran the charity using the name Dr Tobias Bernstein, insists he will never return to this country.

Police want to interview Bernson, who was given a two-year sentence after admitting three charges, including trying to defraud a creditor and for allegedly becoming a trustee of a charity without declaring his criminal record, a non-arrestable offence.

Meanwhile, singer Bob Dylan has given his blessing for one of his songs to be recorded as part of the campaign to ban handguns following the massacre, in which 16 schoolchildren and one teacher died.

The recording of Dylan's anthem "Knocking on Heaven's Door" will be performed by local musicians and the last verse

will be sung by Duoblane's 1,000 children.

Local musician Ted Christopher came up with the new version of the 1974s hit, with new lyrics, borrowed partly from Psalm 23, *The Lord is my Shepherd*.

The new second verse is: *Lord, these guns have caused too much pain.*

*This town will never be the same.*

*So, for the bairns of Dunblane, We ask, please, never again.*

Any profits from the project

will go to help starving children around the world, said John Crozier, father of Emily.

Dunblane will come to a standstill on Wednesday as the victims of mass killer, Thomas Hamilton, are remembered at a memorial event in the cathedral - the first time all the families of victims will have been at one service. They will be joined by the Prince of Wales, representing the Royal Family, Scottish Secretary and the local MP, Michael Forsyth and Labour's George Robertson.



William Bernson: Fled to The Netherlands to avoid inquiry

## Treatment boost for cancer patients

Geneticists believe they have found a way to beat the harmful side-effects of chemotherapy, it was announced today. Chemotherapy often leaves cancer patients more ill than they were before they started treatment.

For years, doctors have been hindered in their efforts to help cancer victims because healthy cells are destroyed along with tumours under the onslaught of toxic chemicals during treatment. But now the cells - bone marrow is particularly vulnerable - could be helped to survive, preventing the chances of secondary tumours, and increasing the likelihood of a cure.

Dr Joseph Rafferty, of Manchester's Paterson Institute, explained the findings. "The theory is quite simple. If you sprayed your whole garden with weedkiller, you would kill the weeds as well as the flowers. But if the flowers could be altered to produce a substance

that protected them, only the weeds would die.

"We've managed to get cells in a laboratory to produce such a substance so that chemotherapy only affects the cells we want to kill," he said.

Scientists have successfully developed a mutant version of the protein Aflase which repairs DNA inside cancers and thwarts the benefits of chemotherapy.

Substances have in the past been used to inactivate Aflase and stop the tumours repairing themselves. But this has had the drawback of affecting healthy cells as well.

Now a mutant version of the protein, which is unaffected by the inactivators, has been developed.

Backed by the Cancer Research Campaign, the findings could mean that healthy cells will escape unharmed while cancer cells are made less resistant to treatment.

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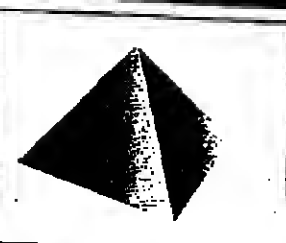
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# The final shunt for British Rail as the privatisation express steams in on time

Who owns what in the new railway



**CARDIFF RAILWAY**  
Owner: Prism Rail (small company launched on stock exchange to run rail services) Routes: Small franchise of services around Cardiff to the valleys and Barry and Penarth Passenger Journeys: 5.8 million per year Subsidy: £19.9m in 1997-98 to £13.3m in 2003-04; Staff: 315 Prospects: Passenger use declined sharply last year and subsidy level remains relatively high.

to south London and Sussex and Hampshire costs Passenger Journeys: 80 million per year Subsidy: £25.3m in 1996-97 declining to £34.6m in 2002-03 Staff: 2,700 Prospects: Unsettling deal with few improvements promised.

**SOUTH EASTERN**  
Owner: CFEA (see previous) Routes: Suburban and regional services out of Victoria and other London terminals to south London and Kent and Sussex costs Passenger Journeys: 103 million per year (most of all 25 franchises) Subsidy: £125.4m in 1996-97 declining to £125.4m in 2002-03 Staff: 4,300 Prospects: Only franchise so far in which new rolling stock is a requirement, not an option. Subsidy reduction is amazingly sharp and will be difficult to remain profitable.

**STAGECOACH**  
Owner: Stagecoach Routes: Small franchise with just 8.5 miles on Isle of Wight operated by old London Tube trains (includes track as well as services) Passenger Journeys: 780,000 per year Subsidy: £2m in 1996-97 reducing to £1.75m in 2000-01 Staff: 44 Prospects: Future of line in doubt as shown by short term of franchise.

**ISLAND LINE**  
Owner: Stagecoach Routes: Small franchise with just 8.5 miles on Isle of Wight operated by old London Tube trains (includes track as well as services) Passenger Journeys: 780,000 per year Subsidy: £2m in 1996-97 reducing to £1.75m in 2000-01 Staff: 44 Prospects: Future of line in doubt as shown by short term of franchise.

**SOUTH WEST TRAINS**  
Owner: Stagecoach Routes: Suburban and regional services out of London Waterloo covering south London and stretching to Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Weymouth Passenger Journeys: 95 million per year Subsidy: £80.1m in 1996-97, declining to £40.3m in 2002-03 Staff: 3,760 Prospects: First franchise allocated offering no fairs or thrills, though now there is the prospect of new trains if Stagecoach is allowed to take over Portsmouth rolling stock company.

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As it was: The liveries of the nationalised railway being applied in 1948. Now it has been replaced with private colours Photograph: Hulton Getty

**CHRISTIAN WOLMAR**  
Transport Correspondent

It was the privatisation they said really was impossible. Yet next week, for the first time since nationalisation almost 50 years ago, more than half of Britain's railway will be in private hands. To the undoubted delight of the Tory party conference, another four rail franchises will be handed over to new private operators, bringing the total to 13 out of 25. So far, however, apart from a spate of new logos and, last week, a new livery on Great Western, passengers will not have noticed much difference, although some will have been inconvenienced by the separation of the network into 25 com-

panies which often fail to liaise properly creating problems over train connections. The new companies have made lots of promises, but given that it takes more than a year to change the timetable or to build a new train, nothing much will show through until after the election. The first rail franchise was handed over to Stagecoach, the bus company, last February. Since then, the bulk of the franchises have been allocated to firms with connections to the bus industry such as National Express, Go-Ahead and First-Bus, sometimes in joint deals involving management buy-out teams. Sea Containers, the Bermuda-based shipping firm, and CGEA, part of Compagnie Generale des Eaux are the only

large multinational firms to win franchises. Transport ministers hope to have all the franchises let by the general election. As Railtrack and most of the now broken-up British Rail has already been privatised, this leaves a future Labour government with a seemingly impossible task if it is to bring about its promise of a "publicly owned, publicly accountable" railway. The franchises, which are mostly for seven years, allows the successful bidder exclusive rights to operate trains on the specified routes and the franchising director, Roger Salmon, sets out detailed terms relating to train frequency, hours of operation and, in certain cases, rolling stock to be used. Where

services are unprofitable, his requirements are largely the same as existing services, but where routes are profitable, he has allowed franchisees considerable leeway. The franchisees lease rolling stock from three companies privatised last December and pay Railtrack for the right to use the track and stations. It is difficult to assess to what extent any improvements will be made on what British Rail would have done anyway. Roger Ford, editor of *Rail Privatisation News*, points out: "There is now around £1.8bn in subsidy going into the rail industry, compared with £1.1bn before the restructuring ... We don't know whether we are going to get value for that extra money." All the new franchisees are

expected to cut jobs but so far only two - South West Trains with 140 losses and South Central with 60 - have made any firm announcements. A rash of job announcements is expected over the next few months. Additional reporting by Oliver Burkeman

The bridge which can cost £37.50 to cross Page 7.

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Abbey Nat	0.5	2.25	2.45	2.7	3.10	3.5	3.5					
Hallifax	0.75	2.15	2.4	2.6	3	3.4	3.4					
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## news

# Toll rises in Skye's battle for freedom road

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES  
Legal Affairs Editor

The legality of the charges to use Britain's most expensive toll bridge will come under challenge this week in a landmark appeal against the first criminal conviction for non-payment

of tolls to a private operator. A lengthy campaign against what protesters view as excessive charges to cross the Skye Bridge has spawned a further 500 cases of non-payment which Wednesday's appeal to the Scottish Court of Session in Edinburgh will turn. The upshot

could have significant ramifications for private transport projects elsewhere. In the face of protests by the 7,000 islanders who signed a petition against it, the bridge project was steamrollered through by the Government under the Private Finance Agreement.

Motorists wanting to make the crossing from Kyle of Lochalsh on the mainland to Kyleakin on the island, or vice versa, must fork out £5.20 each way in the summer months and £8.60 for the return journey in winter. Buying a book of 10 tickets reduces the cost to £2.44 for a

single journey, but this compares badly to just 40p for crossing the Forth. Four coaches pay £37.50 for a single summer journey compared to just £6.50 on the Humber Bridge. HGVs pay £25.40 throughout the year, compared to £1 on the Forth and 60p on

the Erskine. What the local protest group, Skat (Skye and Kyle Against Tolls), has dubbed the tarran toll tax is unique among toll schemes – and the poll tax – because non-payment is a criminal, not civil, offence. Islanders and Highland councillors believe the tolls

represent an unfair burden on the travelling public which impinges disproportionately on local people and threatens tourism and economic development. For those not wishing to risk withholding payment, Skat has advised other ways of registering polite protest, such as paying up to £1 in pennies and the rest in 5p coins, having whip-rounds from other occupants of the car, dropping the change, and asking for receipts.

Andy Anderson, a retired union negotiator, was the first refusenik to be convicted under the 1991 Road and Streetworks Act and fined £30 for each of five charges. In August, Lord McCuskey, sitting as a "sifting" judge, certified that he had raised substantial legal points that should be heard by the three-judge Edinburgh court. After repeated applications to the Scottish Legal Aid Board, he secured legal aid last week.

Aid has been refused for the trials in the pipeline. Two hundred of the peeping prosecutions are scheduled to come up for plea in the local Dingwall Sheriff Court on Friday. The appeal will raise a fundamental constitutional question under article 18 of the Act of Union (1706 in England, 1707 in Scotland), which lays down that no excise can be levied in Scotland which is not raised in England. Precedents have been set in England over bridgeable inshore islands. There are no tolls on the bridges linking the Isle of Grain or the Isle of Sheppey in Kent.

The other main ground of appeal flows from the Scottish Office's alleged failure to follow proper procedures under the 1991 Act which means, Mr Anderson's lawyers will argue, that toll operators Miller Civil Engineering, who built the bridge, have no legal warrant to stop people and demand money. There's no way we are going to accept that. I'm no criminal."

Skat's legal organiser, Robbie the Pict, who changed his name in protest at the 1981 Immigration Act which made Scots "citizens" rather than subjects of the UK, said: "This is a civil rights protest. It is the right to challenge a bad law."

Mr Anderson, 57, said that just like the poll tax, Scotland was being used as guinea pig under the Act. "Contained within it is the criminalisation of anyone who refuses to pay the tolls. Why does this Government, in a democratic country, feel it is necessary to do that? They are experimenting like they did with the poll tax."

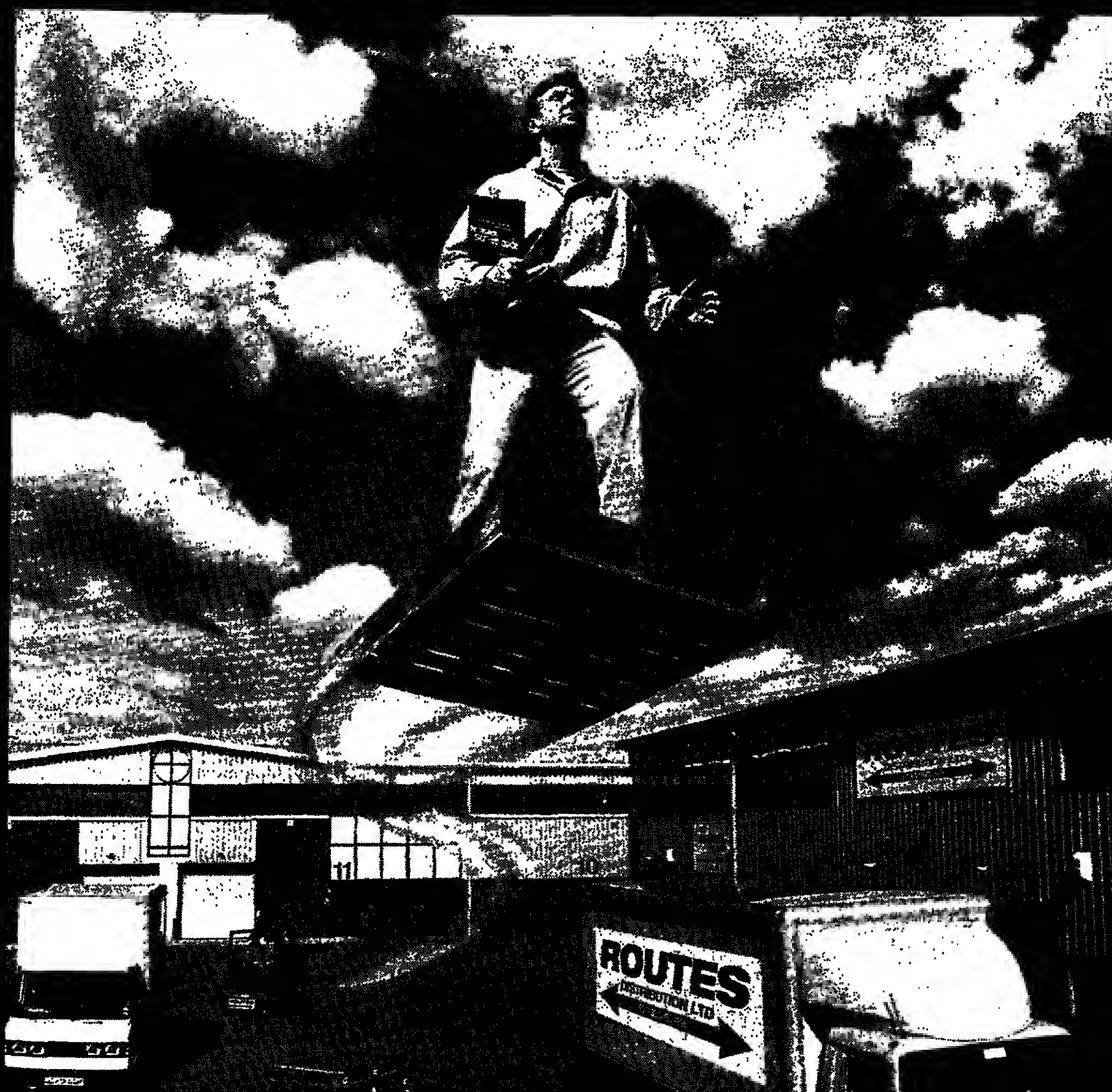
**'This is a civil rights protest. It is the right to challenge a bad law'**

The Government argues that the toll charges are less than the old ferry service. But Skat members feel that they have effectively paid for their bridge already, through the high charges levied by the ferry operator Caledonian Macbrayne.

It was this company's major shareholder, the Bank of America, that put up the finance for the bridge in conjunction with Miller. Once the bridge opened last October, Caledonian Macbrayne ceased the ferry service, ensuring a handsome payback and no competition. If Mr Anderson loses his appeal, it could give the green light to the Government to impose similar arrangements elsewhere.



Bridge of sighs: Motorists crossing to Skye in the summer months are charged £5.20 each way (£4.30 in winter) – compared to a toll of just 40p for using the Forth Bridge



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## DAILY POEM

### Atlas

By UA Panthorpe

There is a kind of love called maintenance,  
Which stores the WD-40 and knows when to use it;

Which checks the insurance, and doesn't forget  
The milkman, which remembers to plant bulbs;

Which answers letters, which knows the way  
The money goes, which deals with dentists

And Road Fund Tax and meeting trains,  
And postcards to the lonely, which upholds

The permanently rickety elaborate  
Structures of living; which is Atlas.

And maintenance is the sensible side of love,  
Which knows what time and weather are doing  
To my brickwork; insulates my faulty wiring;  
Laughs at my dryrotten jokes, remembers  
My need for gloss and grouting; which keeps  
My suspect edifice upright in the air;  
As Atlas did the sky.

Thursday is National Poetry Day and for the fifth year the Forward Poetry Trust publishes a collection of the best poems of the year to coincide with its annual prizes. Ursula Panthorpe, along with Charles Boyle, John Fuller, Seamus Heaney and WN Herbert, is shortlisted for the Best Collection category for *Safe as Houses* (Peterloo). The Forward Book of Poetry is published in association with Faber & Faber on 10 October at £6.95.

cancer  
research  
campaign

THE INDEPENDENT

## Breast Awareness

One in 12 women will develop breast cancer in Britain. The survival rate for early stage cancers is now 85 per cent, so knowledge and awareness are the best weapons against the disease.

In Tuesday's new look Section 2 there will be an eight-page special report, produced in association with the Cancer Research Campaign, which will describe the risk factors, symptoms and treatments of breast cancer to help maximise the chances of survival.

صكذا من الأهل



**Middle East crisis:** White House suspects Israeli PM will use talks to delay withdrawal

## US fears grow of Netanyahu's plan for Hebron

PATRICK COCKBURN  
Jerusalem

An old Washington political saying holds that "whatever a US administration thinks about the rest of the world on coming into office, it always leaves it four years later hating the Israelis and the French".

Hate may be too strong a word for the feelings of the Clinton administration, at the end of its first term, towards Benjamin Netanyahu. But in the four months since he became Prime Minister, the White House has come to suspect, dislike and fear him.

Suspicion that he plans to use the Palestinian-Israeli talks, which started yesterday at the Erez checkpoint near Gaza, in order to stall on a withdrawal from Hebron explains why President Bill Clinton decided to send Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, to Israel as a babysitter to the negotiations. At a press conference yesterday with Mr Netanyahu, he stressed the need for implementing the Oslo accords.

The US is angry with Mr Netanyahu, because by opening the tunnel under the Muslim quarter in Jerusalem, he broke his promise not to spring unpleasant surprises on Washington. Then, as violence flared in the wake of the tunnel opening, he refused an American request to close it. When Mr Clinton asked him to set a date for the redeployment from Hebron, home to 100,000 Palestinians, he turned him down.

"The Americans now expect Netanyahu to give them their due," writes Hemi Shalev, an Israeli analyst, "not in pretty words, but through logical and

accelerated talk on Hebron, speedy implementation of the redeployment in the city and furthering other issues from the Oslo Accords that remain unresolved."

In Washington, Mr Netanyahu, after first showing defiance in the wake of the tunnel opening, adopted a more conciliatory tone, notably in his relations with Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader. But Americans and Palestinians alike fear Mr Netanyahu will use the talks starting today to renegotiate agreements signed by the previous Israeli government.

The prospects for agreement do not look hopeful. Mr Arafat wants implementation of the accords he signed last year with Israel. His five main demands are: a date for Israeli redeployment from Hebron; implementation of the agreement on safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza; Palestinian control of the airport at Gaza; release of 3,500 Palestinian prisoners; and the start of negotiations on a final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel has a wholly contrary agenda. Much revolves around limiting the autonomy of the Palestinian enclaves by buffer zones, limitation on the type of arms to be carried by Palestinian police, pursuit of attackers, punishing police who fired at Israelis, and no release of prisoners who have killed Israelis.

If a crisis in the talks does occur, it is not clear what the US can do about it. Gen Rafael Eitan, the Agriculture Minister, says Mr Netanyahu is the first Israeli prime minister who is "not sucking up to the Americans". President Clinton also has an interest in preventing a

crisis occurring before he faces re-election in November.

The Israeli negotiating team will be headed by Lt Gen Dan Shomron and the Palestinian side by Saeb Erekat, Minister of Local Government in the Palestinian Authority. All substantive decisions will be taken by Mr Netanyahu. An Israeli analyst noted gloomily that, as a young Israeli diplomat in Washington, Mr Netanyahu was first noticed in 1985 when he wrote an article for the *Wall Street Journal* arguing that agreement with Palestinians was not central to peace in the Middle East.



Two's company: Palestinian girls pass Israeli checkpoint in Hebron yesterday, after Israel ended a 10-day curfew in the city

Photograph: AP

## Lebed sells soft line to Nato

PHIL REEVES  
Moscow

Russia's maverick security chief, Alexander Lebed, will today begin two days of talks at Nato headquarters after arriving in Brussels on his first visit to the West, saying he had "new proposals" over the Alliance's plans to expand into Eastern Europe.

Over the last few weeks, the retired general has issued several thunderous warnings about the consequences of Nato expansion, but he struck a more moderate note when he prepared yesterday to meet his former Cold War foe.

He looked forward to a "complicated but civilised dialogue", he said, although he added that details of his new proposals were for the ears of Javier Solana, Nato's secretary-general, whom he meets today.

In recent weeks, Nato has been receiving mixed messages from Russia, not least because Moscow's senior officials tend to be more damning at home than they are in the West. Although Russia has consistently opposed Nato's plans to expand into the Eastern bloc, Moscow's has wavered between the conciliatory and the hardline.

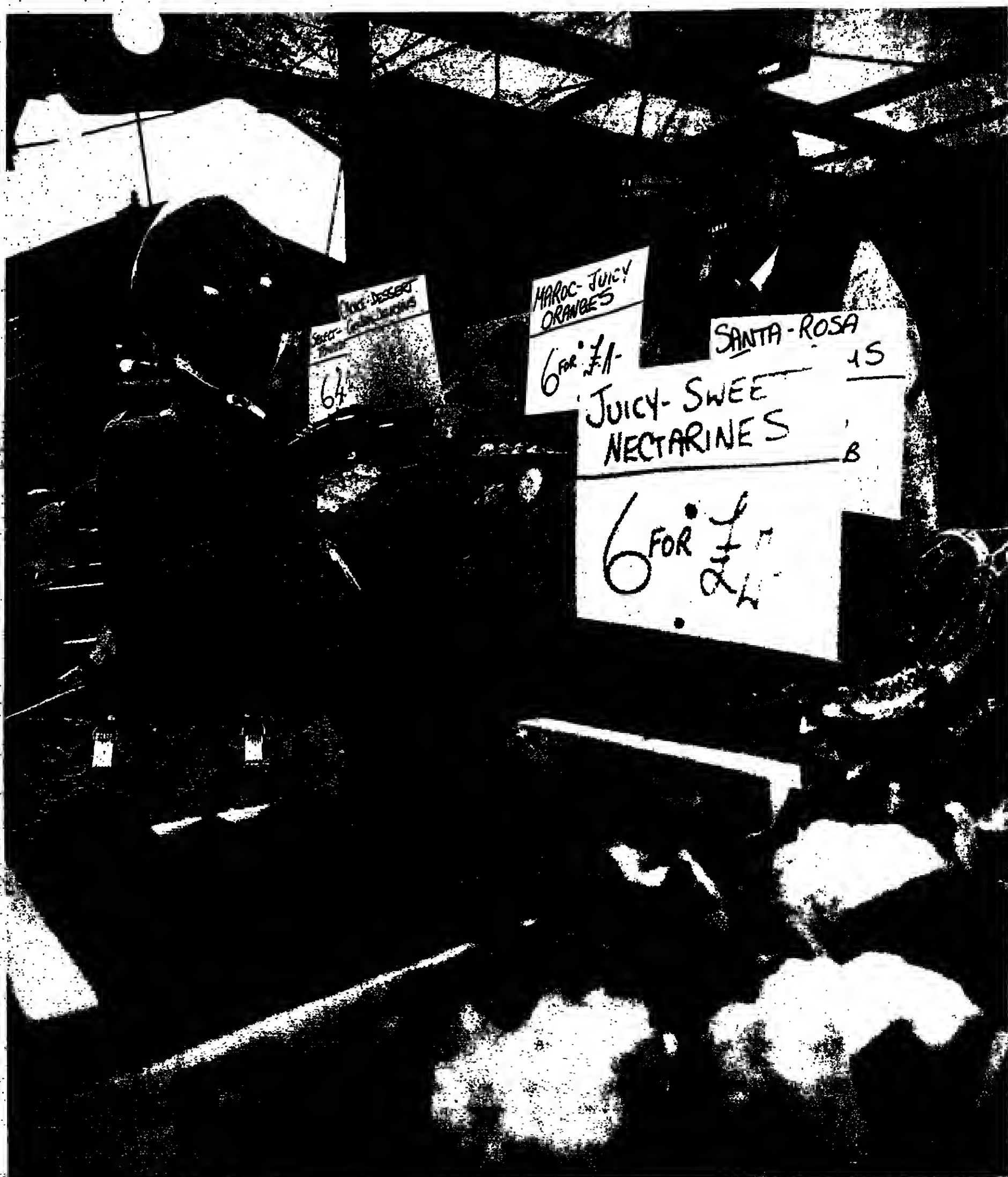
The hospitalised Boris Yeltsin recently indicated that he wants a treaty with Nato which would govern Russia's re-



Lebed: Has new proposals for Nato's expansion east

lationship with the alliance, before it goes ahead with expansion - a suggestion which met with approval within Nato. And his foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, has stressed that he does not want the expansion issue to threaten co-operation between Russia and the West.

The defence minister, Igor Rodionov, last week suggested that arms reduction agreements would be in jeopardy if Nato pressed ahead with its plans. He called for the alliance to transform itself into an international peace-keeping organisation, under the UN.



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## international

# The guns have stopped firing, but the war goes on



Symbol of shame: The entrance to the Dutch battalion HQ at Potocari recalls the West's failure to protect Srebrenica's Muslims

Photograph: Robert Fisk

The place is haunted. The moulder buildings, the broken glass, the smashed factories in which young Muslims had their throats cut just 14 months ago stand as mute witnesses to savagery. On one factory wall, a man wrote his name, "EMIR", in capital letters, a Muslim name. Probably he is in a mass grave down the road.

At Potocari lies the evidence of the West's shame and humiliation: a great concrete block, partly overgrown but still white-painted and bearing the clear words: "UN HQ DUTCHBAT". The gate lies open, the refuse of the Dutch battalion – those who stood by as the thousands were taken away for the slaughter – still litters the UN's abandoned watchtowers, its mess and headquarters offices, its medical post and its commanding officer's billet.

And now the Serbs – those who will forever be associated with the name of Srebrenica – have stuffed this terrible place with their own refugees, men and women and children who fled homes in Muslim towns and cities in the last days of the Bosnian war.

They did not suffer as the Muslims of Srebrenica suffered, but the newcomers have no reason to love the ghosts among

whom they now live. In a town of martyrs, the terror of the previous inhabitants has been replaced by the pain of Srebrenica's new citizens. And when you walk the streets of this damp, cold place, you understand the truth about the Dayton agreement: that while the guns are no longer firing, the war goes on.

The local Serb police do not like journalists but we had driven to Srebrenica with one of those wounded families who beg for lifts on every road in Bosnia: a sick little girl, her hungry mother and a grandmother who admitted – half an hour into our

**'The factory is infamous. Muslim men were shot and a woman raped'**

journey – that her brothers had both been shot dead at the front. A few minutes later, she added, almost as an afterthought, that her husband had been killed by a shell in Sarajevo.

The family, of course, were Serbs. "How do we know what happened here?" the mother asked, not entirely honestly I thought but, as she said, she had her own problems. "All our friends are scattered. We came from Zenica before we were

**BACK TO BOSNIA**

driven out and then we had to leave Sarajevo. This place ... and she paused in an uncomfortable way, "well, it's a closed sort of place. There's not enough electricity to run the refrigerator. You can't even make a cup of coffee. Telephones? You must be joking with me.

Our home is damp all through." I felt like saying, but who are we to stand on moral ground? I felt like saying that the previous occupants of their grubby apartment must have found it damp too, starving there for three terrible years before the end came and the menfolk were taken away forever. But the little girl, Nevna, felt sick – she had been travelling all day on a cold bus from the Serb town of Derвента – so I opened

the window and stopped the car. Through the soft, thick rain, we could see the entrance gate of the old UN camp at Potocari. Here it was – and I recognised the exact location from the Serb television tape – that General Ratko Mladic reassured the people of Srebrenica that no harm would come to them. The barbed wire that the Dutch troops laid so trustfully around the camp to protect, as they naively thought, the thousands of terror-stricken Muslims remains, heavy with rust, the rags of sheets and clothes still flapping mournfully in the rain.

Inside this place of ignominy, the wreckage of the UN's honour was still intact. The watch towers stood with UN painted on the side – I climbed into one and found a heap of Dutch documents lying on the floor. The main phone-lines were still intact. There were easy chairs and benches for the outdoor café and, just inside the headquar-

ters, a list of instructions for dialling home to Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The Dutch, one couldn't help thinking, knew how to look after themselves at Srebrenica. Massive concrete slabs, protection against Serb shells, remain in place around Lieutenant Colonel Kerremans' old offices. A middle-aged man was picking potatoes in a field next to the factory. "UNPROFOR," he shouted at me and booted with laughter.

The factory is already infamous. Here Muslim men were shot and here a woman was taken for rape, and somewhere in the factory's dank interior at least three women hanged themselves. In the narrow town – and how claustrophobic it still feels, the squalid streets hemmed in like a half-opened book between the sides of the valley and the forests through which the Muslims fled in their thousands – a few Serb peasants were selling cabbage and tooth-

paste from wooden stands. They were grey-faced with cold. Old men were coughing on the frozen balconies of refugee shacks, places of thick blue smoke from wood fires and of dripping roofs. "We don't know what is what," a girl said when I asked her if she understood

**'Nothing was said when we were killed. We had 20 funerals a night'**

the enormity of what happened here. "The world exaggerates. Nobody said anything when we were killed. We had 20 funerals a night." And she drew heavily on a dirty cigarette.

The only new building in town is a post office where the Serbs – despite the words of Nevena's mother – had connected a set of telephone lines to the outside world. A young woman refugee from Sarajevo – a schoolteacher now in the

Kosovo capital of Pristina – described the sullen despair that lay across the town. "Nothing to do, no future, no life," she said, and shrugged. I remarked that Kosovo had its own problems. "Maybe, but I want to live there," she said. "My father was threatened in Sarajevo, that's why we had to come here." And would she teach members of the Muslim majority in Pristina if she stayed in Kosovo? "No," she said with a smile. She was not a bad woman; she spoke beautiful English, wanted to talk. But there was a blandness about what this place meant.

She was like the two girls we

drove towards Bratunac. Here it was that the execution squads worked through the night in a yard. Everyone in Bratunac must have known. But the girls were all ignorant. "Terrible things happen in war," one of them said, a poor woman with a terrible scar on her face about which I dared not ask.

Then there was the army nurse who worked at the military hospital at Han Pijesak. In the mountains above this village,

the Muslims fleeing Srebrenica were cut down in their hundreds, screaming from mortal wounds, executed, pleading with their friends to kill them when their legs and arms were torn off by Serb grenades. There must have been a lot of shooting in these woods last year, I said carefully. "Probably," she replied. She wanted history to pass her by.

Yet history is passing us all by. The road whose verges were once lined with dead men and prisoners awaiting execution, their clothes scattered over the fields, the streams scattered with men whose throats were cut, have been cleansed as surely as Srebrenica.

The highway is marked with a new white line, its verges neatly trimmed. The great forests with a thousand shades of green sway in the rain, hissing with the wind that moves gently down from Nova Kasaba, the little village where the Muslims of Srebrenica were lined up in their thousands at the execution pits.

"When I think of what happened, I don't feel well," a Serb lady, a woman of honour who acknowledged privately what we both knew to be true. "I would not ever want to walk in those woods."

"None of us would," I said.

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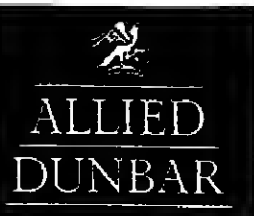
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**THE INDEPENDENT**

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# THE Independent Decade



Brave new world: The Canary Wharf towers is a potent symbol of the boom-and-bust Eighties – and the decade's legacy for the Nineties

Photograph: Brian Harris

## So little time, so much to do in a wired world

Ten years on, we can be sure of one thing only. The Eighties fizzed out somewhere during the mid-Nineties and this decade truly began.

Ronald Reagan's brain, it was declared officially, was disintegrating and Tony Blair had begun his ascent. Those standard-bearers of Eighties materialism – Lynne Franks, yuppies and estate agents – fell out of favour or became Buddhists. We were no longer comfortable with their conspicuous consumption, but we grabbed like maniacs at their accoutrements: mobile phones, fax machines, laptops.

The democratisation of technology during *The Independent's* first decade means more of us now live in a world of instantaneous communication. It matters not that we have little to communicate to each other, it matters simply that we can – hence those scintillating snippets of conversation one overhears on every journey. "Yes, I'm just on the train. We've just stopped at a junction..."

The rise of this new, imagined community of those locked out to screens, whether via the Internet, or kids' computer games has fostered a measure of concern that we will no longer be able to tell reality from fantasy.

The reality is that there are plenty locked out of this information-rich world. They are not simply information-poor, but poor in the old-fashioned sense of not having enough money. We have over the last 10 years become, increasingly used to stepping over bodies huddled in sleeping bags. We have even invented a new label for them – The Underclass.

A wired world has certainly blurred the distinction between home and work. It has undoubtedly contributed to the privatisation of leisure. The television is no longer the hearth around which the whole family gather. Instead, one child may be doing her homework on her mother's PC, her brother listening to CDs and Dad watching a video. The family meal to



Introducing a week of articles and features to mark our tenth birthday, Suzanne Moore reflects on our changing lives in a changing society

has given way to grazing and the ping of the microwave.

Does all this mean we have more choice, or are we living an atomised existence, deprived of any sharing, caring feelings? Yes and no. Certainly, the fear that fuels our renewed commitment to community and decency is that the whole process of individualisation has gone too far.

Yet it is possible to see during the last 10 years a quest for the collective experience, whether it be through dancing in a field with thousands of others, going to a football match – or even grooving to Oasis in the very same sports stadium.

Raves, the rise of the chemical generation, the ascendant

cy of sports, the net-surfers, the interest in "new age" consciousness, as well as environmental politics, all point to a sense of the collective: a collective that can no longer be easily co-opted by the traditional ideologies of the left or right.

Whatever our yearnings might be, the overriding narrative of the past decade is fragmentation. Depending on where you stand, either we are going through a period of profound transition or everything is just falling apart. Either the family, our political institutions, the monarchy – even men, the poor things – are on their way out, or they are reconstructing themselves.

"Adapt or die" might be a suitable motto, though we prefer somewhat desperately to find scapegoats such as single mothers, rather than having to face up to some harsh truths. The far-reaching effects of globalisation have yet to be felt. Our anxieties have surfaced in a series of moral panics that have attained a momentum all of their own.

We have become so fretful about what we are reproducing in society that we have projected this fear on to our children. The young have become, in news story after news story, either innocent angels or murdering devils, although we continue to turn away in disbelief from the statistics on child abuse.

Intimacy itself became more dangerous once we faced up to Aids, yet as one dance record put it: "People are still having sex." The overt sexualisation of our culture continues to advance in these post-feminist, post-political days. Irony after all, remains the over-arching aesthetic. Or excuse.

Having detached itself from sex as we used to understand it, ethical dilemmas abound in the sphere of reproduction itself. Having given up on space exploration, the final frontier is now that of inner space and genetics. We still talk of genetic engineering as though it is of the future rather than the present. Science continues to vie with quasi-mystical explanations over the meaning or meaninglessness of life.

As if in response, culture has become more visceral: from Tarantino to Hirst, blood and guts are centre-stage.

Those in work do it harder than ever, but more of us now talk of the "quality of life", which can no longer be defined in purely material terms. Stress – which used to be the prerogative of the elite – has been slowly democratised. Now, anyone can be stressed out.

We complain that we don't have enough time. So little time, it seems, we can scarcely believe that another 10 years have gone by.

### Urban realities

## Tales of the city and the tower of dreams

Perhaps more than anything else, the towering presence of Canary Wharf in east London's docklands symbolises the 10-year economic and social rollercoaster which saw this monument to Thatcherism rise from dereliction, go spectacularly bust, and then return on a fresh wave of optimism.

The 50-storey tower, centre-piece of the docklands transformation, was the most visible example of regeneration in many of Britain's inner cities. The tower, which is now home to *The Independent* and its Sunday sister, was the result of a controversial market-led strategy to create a prestigious development as London's "third centre", after the City and the West End. Similar schemes, on a smaller scale, were created in most of Britain's larger cities.

The results have been decidedly mixed. There have undoubtedly been heartening transformations in some areas, particularly those next to the former docks in Bristol, Liverpool and Salford, but the failures outnumber the

successes. While it has proved possible to regenerate areas with large swathes of unused land, the traditional inner-city estates remain a sad testament to the failures of decades.

The clearances of the 1960s created a new generation of estates which, although not called slums, are often little different from those that were demolished to make way for them, except that the type of housing – tower blocks rather than cramped terraces – is worse outside but better inside. Many have already been demolished and many more would be, if so much money had not been taken out of local authority housing programmes.

Labour's dominance of the inner cities meant that urban regeneration was one of Mrs Thatcher's obsessions because of the challenge it presented. Indeed, one of the enduring images of the 1980s was Mrs Thatcher kicking off her high heels to stalk across a derelict site in Stockton-on-Tees during the 1987 election

campaign. As she celebrated victory at that election, she stood outside Number 10 and declared "now to win our inner cities".

The Thatcherite model for urban regeneration was typically confrontational. Existing structures of local democracy and community were ignored. Instead, all powerful urban development corporations were created, generously funded and able to take all planning decisions without reference to the objections of local people. Only private housing was to be built. Large model projects were to be created by attracting inward investment from multi-nationals and other big firms, and the wealth created by them would trickle down.

The policy came complete with large amounts of money. The London Docklands Development Corporation, for example, has received about £2.25bn in grants since its creation 15 years ago; about half the total allocation for all the development corporations, fuelling criticism that many inner-city

areas have lost out in favour of the prestige projects.

Certainly, in London's Docklands, a lot has been built on the wasteland of 15 years ago. But there has been little real regeneration. A lot of jobs have been attracted to the new offices, subsidised through rate-free periods and tax concessions, but existing communities have been left little. Most of the jobs, like those at *The Independent*, have been displaced from other areas, rather than genuinely created.

Despite all the resources, the problems remain. The story of urban regeneration is punctuated with white elephants and broken promises. Too often, policies have ignored the crucial component – people.

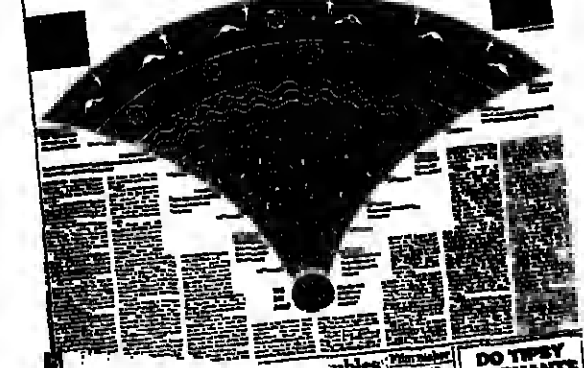
As Peter Hall, Professor of Planning at London University puts it: "There can't be any regeneration if only 10 per cent of kids in some schools are getting five or more GCSEs."

Christian Wolmar

### Days of our lives

THE INDEPENDENT

How the universe began



THE INDEPENDENT

IRA bombers attack No 10 War Cabinet



THE INDEPENDENT

14 killed as gunman runs wild



THE INDEPENDENT

How MI5 plotted Wilson's fall



THE INDEPENDENT

The truth behind Iraq's 'supergun' is revealed



From the birth of the Universe to the IRA's almost successful bid to murder members of the Cabinet as they held a council of war inside the supposed security of Downing Street. From the banned memoirs of an eccentric former spy in a funny hat to minutes of insanity in a Berkshire town during which 14 people were gunned down. A rich variety of front pages from the last 10 years, some driven by the news, others, such as the graphical representation of the dawning of life, driven by the fevered imagination of journalists





# After the pleasure came the pain

I first heard the acronym Aids in Dubai, of all places, at dinner with an American woman who had brought along her subscription copy of *Time* magazine.

She flipped through the pages, found what she was looking for, told me "John, you'll be interested in this" and began to read aloud. And as she did ("Virus... cancer... immune system... gay men... San Francisco... mystery... methods of transmission... fatal") - I felt - and this was an instant, instinctive recognition - panic, building to terror, and something else again: a foreshadowing. A dread yet certain sense of one time terminating and another beginning. I listened and knew - just knew - that my life, and countless others, would be... derailed.

Anyway, my American friend concluded her recital, pushed her Apocalypse purchase at me with an almost triumphant, "Well, what do you think about that?" And I remember being pleased that I could answer with a cool flippancy. I did not remotely feel: "Marlene, I don't want to think about that."

That was 14 dead friends and acquaintances ago. More than a lifetime - many lifetimes (millions of lifetimes, globally speaking). And the thing I didn't want to think about, I think about every day. With each condom bought.

Whenever my lover signals he's in the mood, As I scan the press for medical updates, cautiously expressed breakthroughs, for names I might know that have gone on ahead. Whenever I notice someone I know has lost a lot of weight, fast. Whenever news of another funeral summons little except *deja vu*.

You had to be there: I belong to the first 'Out', post-liberation generation of gay men and our existences were meant to be different.

We would not be wilfully oppressed, or repressed; sex would not be dirty or demeaning or dangerous for us. Indeed, we would find and defiantly define ourselves in sex, in the forbidden pleasures the world called our shame.

Looking back - and looking back is difficult, because one is tempted to buy the notion of earthly Paradise - it's easy to see that was always going to be a blind alley (one lesson of Aids - and yes, contrary to cant, HIV and Aids do teach, the vicious little bastards - is that full identity cannot be found solely in sex).

But the exploration was in-

## Aids

toricating, before it turned out to be a cruel trick of fate. It was so exquisitely, historically timed. Aids arrived at the pivotal moment when gay culture, gay politics, gay life were fusing, emerging, and its arrival did what bigots hatred could not: made you feel, for this moment, like a filthy little faggot again.

It was a message most of the western media was happy to ride, at the beginning, as rates of infection grew and people you knew were diagnosed and died.

Then, if they lived a year, you counted yourself lucky (or unlucky). And, as the pace quickened, terrible things happened inside your head, because no one outside your disintegrating circle could seem to grasp that it was war, fought in the trenches with untried drugs and experimental therapies, and that losing your hard-gained loved ones shouldn't be happening, not now. No, later, in your fifties, sixties, seventies.

And the primal contradiction was literally killing out of pleasure had come this apparently permanent pain. And, it became increasingly plain, purpose, of a sort.

If Aids destroyed, it also bizarrely rebuilt. It provided increased visibility, a rallying point, killed artists but galvanised art, made activists out of the most unlikely gay men, took gay issues and gay rights into the heart of political institutions. Taught us, in our anger and grief, to demand and battle, not ask and wait.

In short, our refusal to be victims drove us mainstream, beyond our original ghetto, beyond what could have become siege mentality.

Aids made many gay men take control. And now the word is that the latest "inhibitors" may render Aids "manageable", further tests permitting. Even after so many false dawns, a friend feels moved to call and say "The nightmare's ending", which is, I tell him, a death-wish of another sort. But he's entitled.

This February his blood proved positive, and though he knows, I and many others, have grown conflicted, grown crazed, grown cold on a certain subject, we still don't want to lose our nearest and dearest. So I let his optimism splash over me, while all the time thinking that nightmares never end: some have out too much, changed you too radically, for you to quietly let them go.

John Lyttle



Material girl: But today's fashions place the emphasis on subtlety and quiet sophistication Photograph: Herbie Knott

# If she's got it, she won't flaunt it

## All dressed up

Excess. Big hair, gilt belts, wide shoulders, red lipstick, blue mascara, gob-stopper earrings. Status dressing was the order of the day with designer or look-alike Chanel, Armani, and Versace. Women smelled of power and money whether they had any or not. The in-your-face smell of *Opium* was all pervasive.

In 1986, women either looked like they had just stepped off the set of *Dynasty* with armoured suits and spike-heeled shoes, or out of the Madonna fan club, with black lace ribbons in their punked-up hair, lace tights and a cropped top, baring their midriff. Or they would be out jogging in their pink and purple shell suits.

1996, and the shops, from The Gap to Jigsaw to Versace - perhaps once the most excessive label of them all - are full of pared-down suits with shoulders that neatly follow the line of your own, minimal fitted shirts, and basic utility shirt dresses. If you don't wear a jacket to work, it's not the end of the world; a cardigan will do instead. Excess is out. Clothes whisper rather than scream and shout.

The subtle scent of *CK One* splashed on from its clear, anonymous bottle, is in the air. Status dressing still exists. But in the mid-Nineties, the post-feminist wealthy power women don't need gilt encrusted armour to prove their strength. Instead, they opt for a low-key Prada uniform. Only those in the know can estimate the price of a stretch nylon suit at over £800. Or the £700 price tag on the simple black handbag hooked casually over her shoulder. The High Street can copy all it likes, but what matters is the detail - and above all, the cut of the cloth. The Prada club might be much more low-key but it is every bit as elitist as the Chanel club of a decade ago.

The Eighties supermodel had

breasts, and features that looked as though they had been artificially inflated, while the mini-model of the mid-Nineties is flat-chested with natural hair and little make-up. She is as unassuming as the clothes.

In the years between the demise of pneumatic amazon and the advent of delicate waif, we have seen skirt hems move up and down to every conceivable length, from minuscule thigh-grazer to knee length, and down to the ankle; we have seen seams on the inside of clothes as well as on the outside, with the shredded deconstructionism of the early Nineties; we have seen exaggerated womanhood with Vivienne Westwood's bum cages and padded shoulders; and we have seen sportswear increase its stranglehold on the way we dress. Lycra has gone from being the Eighties miracle to an everyday ingredient at Marks & Spencer.

The law of designer labels is not what it was. While Madonna may have defined the Eighties for women, Oasis, the lads from Manchester with their shaggy haircuts and their sporty anoraks and trainers, have defined the mid-Nineties for men. The influence of the brothers Gallagher has been as strong on the way men dress now as the Armani suit used to be.

Ten years is not quite long enough for the trends of 1986 to be revived. But give it a few years and the comeback will be in full swing. Some of the best-sellers of 1986 are already nudging their way back into the designer collections. Karl Lagerfeld has reintroduced the legging at Chanel. And on the London catwalks earlier this month, Red or Dead brought back - you guessed it - the shell suit, on sale from next spring.

Tamsin Blanchard

# Smiling face of the chemical generation

## Rave culture

phone calls, followed by a convoy excursion around the M25, and arrival at some stroboscopic version of Utopia in a muddy field near Beckenham.

Alcohol and chat-up lines were suddenly, hilariously uncorked; trainers, Lucozade and tracksuit bottoms were the rave's love affair.

It is amazing, now, to recall how reluctant clubs were to get involved. Owners took one look at a scene founded on an illegal drug and indifferent to drink, gave it five minutes and turned their backs.

Only a handful, like Manchester's Hacienda, gave house a home - and

although this was starting to change (the Ministry of Sound, with its ground-breaking 24-hour dance licence, had opened in 1991), it was the Criminal Justice Act which effectively pulled the scene out of the warehouses and installed it on the High Street.

Every town in the country, however humble, now has at least one dance club, and a 4am licence is now commonplace. In most cities, you can dance legally until the following lunchtime or beyond.

To all intents and purposes, house music is modern pop music; Radio One fetes DJs like pop stars, *Match of the Day* picks club classics for its theme tunes. Corporate clubbing has

become a cliché, clubs are market "brands". Ecstasy deaths are a fact of life.

But there is nothing much particularly special about the Ecstasy generation any more.

The chemical smile is neither knowing nor secret - yesterday's revolution has become today's *Top of the Pops*. This is as much a source of sadness to its earliest pioneers as it is to the anti-drug crusaders - for what Ecstasy has gained in institutionalisation, it has lost in wide-eyed wonderment.

A decade on, and we are already wondering what happens next.

Decca Aitkenhead

# From nuclear family to microwave society

## Home and hearth

In the past it was simple. Dad went out to work, mum stayed at home to mind the 1.5 children and the family was the cornerstone of society. Not anymore. Now women rush through the door at 6pm shouting "Honey, I'm home". Instead of a family meal, the children have a microwaved snack before retreating to their rooms, to computer screens or MTV. Dad fills in yet another form for the Child Support Agency as his 22-year-old stepson broods on the days until he turns 25 and, eligible for full benefit, can finally afford to leave home.

The family has changed enormously in a decade. In 1986 there was no CSA, no Children Act, no no-fault divorce. Fertility treatments were still being developed and campaigns for fathers' rights were barely a glint in Bob Geldof's eye.

More sombrely, as *The Independent* launched, the reality of large-scale child abuse was yet to emerge, the reform of benefits for young people were just about to begin, as was the decision by more twentysomethings to put off or opt out of having their own families altogether. As the wild

popularity of Sainsbury's Chicken Tikka Masala (for one) attests, one of the significant changes of the last decade has been that more and more people are remaining single. One in four households is now someone living alone, and one in five women will never have children.

But it is the growing band of single mothers that has drawn the wrath of the moral right - or, more accurately, single mothers with "values on benefit". For the affluent, single parenthood achieved a certain cachet. For those living on council estates it became synonymous with fecklessness and scrounging. Surveys show a growing polarisation in wealth between "work-rich" (dual earner) and "work-poor" (no career) families. By the end of the decade, one in four households - had incomes of less than half the national average.

Meanwhile, if the Seventies witnessed the birth of women's rights, the Nineties put fathers' rights on the

agenda - a mood caught by Bob Geldof, who, as he sought custody of his three children, announced his determination to bring "the rights of wronged fathers to public attention". Nothing united militant fathers so much as the creation of the CSA in 1993. While people supported the agency in principle, its catalogue of errors, held responsible for a tragic litany of marriage break-ups and suicides, made it even more unpopular than the politicians who invented it.

While fathers' campaigned for their rights, the 1989 Children Act and "no-fault" divorce aimed to put the child's welfare above all. Children can "divorce" their parents, and smacking is likely to become unlawful.

After a year that has seen the first NHS surrogate birth, the destruction of 3,000 frozen embryos, selective abortion of a twin and Mandy Allwood's ill-fated pregnancy, will the test-tube supersede the wedding ring as a symbol of the family?

Glenda Cooper



Food for thought: Poverty and social fragmentation have left children increasingly isolated

Photograph: Craig Easton

## The weekend

# Mammon, the new God of Sundays

"Nowhere to go, nothing to do, just sitting here waiting for the next lot of grub to come up." Tony Hancock's vision of the great British Sunday half a century ago has changed to a startling degree.

Yesterday, Hancock would have struggled to finish the newspapers before nipping up to Ikea for a quick shop, stopping off in the pub for a pint and putting a bet on the 3.30 at Newmarket.

John Major's ideal of old maids cycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist had been under fire before 1986, but in the last 10 years our concept of the weekend has

altered dramatically, as the remaining vestiges of the 1780 Sunday Observance Act have been picked apart, one by one.

While our Sundays have changed, so have Saturdays, which now take Sunday's place as the day for lounging around and recovering from the vicissitudes of the week, before the 7pm dash to buy lottery tickets. Indeed, the National Lottery Live has become the weekend God-sit.

Reflected in this is the growth in the Saturday newspaper, which 10 years ago was regarded as a publishing graveyard. It was *The Independent* which first put forward

Saturday as an alternative to the Sunday titles. Since then, the other papers have followed suit, snowing readers under with lifestyle, review, motoring and property supplements.

Was it the shops that killed off Sunday? Not completely. Working women played their part, as did growing car ownership and declining religious observance, although Church of England figures show only a slight decline in attendances over the last 10 years, from 1.167m in 1986 to 1.081m in 1994.

But shopping did have the single greatest effect. Stores had been breaking the Sunday trading laws for

years, but the repeal of the 1950 Shops Act survived 26 previous attempts at reform, before finally falling victim to Mammon in 1994. Then, its main effect was the proliferation of out-of-town shopping centres, like the massive Metro Centre in Gateshead, and Lakeside at Thurrock in Essex.

Even before the Sunday Trading Bill passed through the Commons with a majority of 404 to 174, nearly two out of three adults did shopping of some kind on Sunday. Now there are three times as many Sunday shoppers as in the early 1980s.

Pub hours were the next target,

with Michael Howard finally agreeing in 1995 that it was a bad idea for drinkers to have to wait until 7pm before they could legitimately supalcohol again. Particularly as so many pubs could now show Premier League games on satellite television during the afternoon. Sunday horse-racing and betting were also made legal in the same year.

Still, the pattern of the British Sabbath has remained largely unchanged. The Sunday lunch is still a regular feature in more than two-thirds of households, although since the BSE scares, the roast is less

likely to be beef. In Hancock's day, as now, the second most popular pastime was visiting or entertaining relatives and friends. Almost precisely the same proportion of the adult population - around 20 per cent - visit a pub or go out for a drink.

However, for any would-be Puritans who long for the return of such days, when all drinking, feasting, games and enjoying yourself were banned without question, there is still one pursuit that the Lords refused to make legal last year, when it came up for review: public dancing.

Glenda Cooper



## Hot pasties and cold realities

In the late 1970s, during Liverpool's astonishing 21-year run of success in Europe, a friend dragged me - an Evertonian - kicking and screaming across Stanley Park to watch his team from the Kop.

At half-time, grudgingly enjoying the match, I sat on the terraces to read my programme and was immediately tugged up by the hair. "You don't want to sit down," he said.

Seconds later, I was grateful for his warning as steaming yellow rivulets welled about my feet. This was how football supporters used to be treated. When you have 16,500 people crushed together on a concrete bank, when there is only one small set of toilets and when getting to those few urinals involves fighting through hordes of beer-bellies, what can you expect?

Years later, in 1989, that same friend found himself pinned, straining for breath, against a barrier at Sheffield Wednesday's ground, Hillsborough, as the man standing next to him, and 95 others, died.

He survived, but he doesn't go to football matches anymore. Which is a shame, because since those terrible times, since the day in 1985 when 56 people died in the Bradford fire disaster, since the day in the same year when 39 people perished at Heysel, and since the day when the Hillsborough victims were packed tighter than sardines behind cruel, unyielding, steel fences, football has really, truly changed.

Not everyone likes the changes, but most people do. Those that can afford it, that is. For as state pork pies and lukewarm cups of Bovril have been replaced by corporate dining and Champagne, so too have standing tickets at a five-a-time been superseded by seats at anything up to £25.

We first began to be treated like human beings after the publication of Lord Justice

### This sporting life

Taylor's report into the Hillsborough disaster, which brought in all-seater stadiums. Those that loved the culture of the terraces howled, but there was no going back; that much, at least, was owed to those who died.

We may not all have liked having to sit down at first, but sitting didn't just mean you bent your knees and put your backside on a seat. Suddenly, there was an entire culture change. Once you allocated someone a space, gave them a number, ticketed them properly, they became a customer, not just an anonymous face in a huge crowd.

There are still people who like cold pasties, just as there are people who tune in to *Match of the Day* to watch Jimmy Hill. But face it, you're in the minority. The injection of money has benefited the average supporter, too. Not financially - how can a 300 per cent increase in admission charges be beneficial? - but those who still go get decent surroundings, clear views, clean toilets... respect.

In Lord Taylor's report, he said the clubs should not use ground improvements as an excuse to increase admission prices, particularly since more than £130m has been made available by the Football Trust as a result of a drop in the football pools levy.

Thousands complain that they can no longer afford to go to matches; a recent Premier League survey showed that active supporters spend an average £60 a week on following their team.

Still, as Brian Clough said to a sheepskin-coated interviewer in 1973: "You lot have a choice. You either pay what you do now and get now, or you pay a fortune and get the lot."

Steve Boggan



Risky business: Hillsborough and Heysel led to tighter security, as well as flashy new stands

Photograph: Tom Pileton

## The magic of television - and Mr Murdoch

### Our media

Ten years ago, when *The Independent* helped to break the mould of national newspaper publishing in the UK, the most influential man in the British media was Rupert Murdoch.

Today, whether in newspapers or in the fast-growing television market, he remains, by far, the most powerful media baron of all.

The decade has been a testimony to the power of the media, and the power that accrues to those who control it. Whether by breaking the unions through the controversial move to Wapping - a watershed that helped make *The Independent* possible - or by launching an aggressive price war in 1994, supplanting the strength of every newspaper title in an attempt to see off the competition, Mr Murdoch has set the agenda.

More recently, it has been the television industry that has seen the fastest changes, and again Mr Murdoch is at centre stage. The Broadcasting Act of 1990 was the ultimate Thatcherite policy: long-lived franchises, not least the world-famous Thames Television, found they could not hold on to their franchises in the auction system that awarded them to the highest bidder.

Thames fell to Michael Green's Carlton Communications, while Lord Hollick's media empire ended up with two southern licences, Anglia and Meridian.

The Act also spurred the growth of commercial radio, one of the British media's success stories ever since it was released from its "pirate" status by the Conservatives two decades ago.

In the past 10 years, commercial local radio has blossomed into the fastest growing advertising medium of all. Just under 200 radio stations vie for listeners. But as the industry has made its great leap forward, there has emerged a fresh challenge - the growth of the integrated commercial radio chains.

Just how local can stations be if they are owned by one of the big regional groupings - GWR or Emip, for example - which increasingly insist that local affiliates accept centrally produced programming?

In commercial radio as in so many other sectors, the proliferation of services has been followed by concentration with the big players snapping up the small. There has been similar pressure towards amalgamation in the BBC's local and regional services.

The driving force of innovation in broadcasting in the past decade however has been satellite television, about which at the start industry grandees had been complacent and dismissive.

When Mr Murdoch launched Sky Television in 1989, he had only one channel, and spent freely to combat the competitive threat from British Satellite Broadcasting, the blue-blooded, "serious" company with backers that included Pearson.

The two competing systems launched a debilitating war, and both began to lose serious money. Baroness Thatcher allowed them to merge, waiving all licence considerations and handing Mr Murdoch the satellite monopoly.

And still the traditional broadcasters ignored him. Multi-channel television would never take off in the UK, they said. Viewers were too used to high-quality programmes for mass audiences.

Who would pay Mr Murdoch a subscription fee to watch niche channels and second-rate imports?

Mr Murdoch had an answer, of course. In the form of the big Hollywood movies and the best that football (and other sports) had to offer.

As it happens, millions did want to watch his service - 3.8 million via satellite today, with 1.4 million more on cable. BSkyB now makes £9 a second in profits and has already become the country's 16th largest company.

One in four UK households receives more channels than the four offered by terrestrial broadcast television and the proportion is set to grow to half by the turn of the century, driven by the slow but relentless growth of cable.

Mr Murdoch made the biggest multi-channel bet, and called the odds impeccably. As a result, it is he who earned the lion's share of the £1bn we spent on cable and satellite television in the last year alone.

Mathew Horsman

## Acacia Avenue feels the wind of change

### Work

Ten years ago, the Baker family could sit back and watch from the comfort of their home in Acacia Avenue as hundreds of thousands of jobs disappeared in the old, heavy industries.

Edward Baker, the 45-year-old head of the household, was shocked by the violent clashes between pickets and police outside Rupert Murdoch's plant in Wapping, east London.

But for the inhabitants of Acacia Avenue these were simply images on the television. Their futures were mapped out and secure. Mr Baker, an accountant, had become finance director at a clothing company. His wife had no need to work

and occupied herself with charity. Their 17-year-old daughter was a trainee cashier in a high street bank and their 18-year-old son was about to go to university to read economics with a career as a manager ahead.

Since those days of contentment and security, the family has suffered a substantial change in its fortunes.

Two years ago, the textiles group where Mr Baker had been employed since he graduated from his college of advanced technology 25 years ago completed a "restructuring programme" and he was made

redundant. He has failed to secure a permanent job. As a self-employed financial consultant he has, however, completed several short-term contracts.

Thousands of others were almost certainly in the same boat: the number of self-employed in the economy as a whole rose from 2.7 million to 3.2 million between 1986 and 1996.

As Edward worked at home, Emily, his wife, discreetly did a little light domestic work for a friend for a small but regular payment (untaxed) and now works part-time at a ladies' outfitters and performs ad hoc secretarial work for a solicitor. She is in good company. The

number of people with second jobs between 1986 and 1996 has increased from 823,000 to 1,284,000 - a rise of 56 per cent.

At the same time as her father, Anne Baker also lost her job, when the bank closed her branch. A year before she left the bank, management had moved her from behind the counter to work in an open area where she dispensed advice and received commission for the financial products she sold rather than a fixed salary. Then she was shown the door.

Mr Baker has since been a receptionist for a hotel, working between 7.30am and 9.30am and 5pm and 7pm. In the

economy as a whole, the number of part-time workers grew from 5 million to 6.4 million - an increase of some 25 per cent.

Andrew, her brother, left university and became a trainee manager with a large engineering company. He has remained with it but many of his contemporaries have been made redundant and he is uncertain about his future. In fact, employment in manufacturing during the decade slid from 5.2 million to 4.6 million, a drop of 12 per cent. Employment in the service sector has increased from 13.7 million to 15.9 million - up 16 per cent. Mr Baker senior believes he

is about to secure a post now that the recession has eoded - £15,000 for a six-monthly renewable contract - rather than the £50,000 per annum he earned as a finance director.

The job is with a much smaller, younger business, designing computer software packages. Many other employers had turned him down. Largely, he thought, because they were looking for someone much younger. He is 55, and many of his contemporaries who attended a "job club" provided by the state employment service have simply given up.

Barrie Clement

## Heroes and villains of a scratchcard generation

### Jackpot junkies

In George Orwell's 1984, Winston Smith walks into a pub to find one "prole" yelling at another: "Can't you bloody well listen to what I say? I tell you no number ending in seven ain't won for over 14 months!"

In 1996 Mr Smith could probably walk into any pub on Saturday afternoon to hear the same thing. From mid-afternoon onwards people queue impatiently in corner shops and mobile phones buzz with requests of "have you got them yet?" until at 7.50pm when the nation gathers around its television sets.

It is not the measured tones of Big Brother, but the news that it Could Be Them. Since its birth in November 1994, the National Lottery has had an impact far greater than even its most ardent champions could have imagined. Every week millions pick six numbers to go for jackpots of anything up to £23m. So far the country seems unable to decide whether it sees the lottery as hero or villain. On one side the tangible effects of its runaway success have been many. The National Lottery has created over 200 mil-

lions since it started - not least of its directors who have picked up huge bonuses.

Reports predict that the lottery is set to boost the economy by creating more than 110,000 jobs within the next five years as many large lottery-funded projects get under way.

But it has made enemies too, not least of Britain's £900m pools industry which has announced a significant fall in business. There are suggestions that 6,500 jobs have so far been lost in pools, off-course betting and bingo companies.

And although 25 per cent of the proceeds from tickets is earmarked for charities, it is from them that the lottery has drawn its fiercest criticism. They say the National Lottery Institute's scratchcards have removed a lucrative way of raising money and that many charities - and their recipients - are suffering as a result.

The lottery has turned gambling into a national pastime, encouraging, for example, women - who tradi-

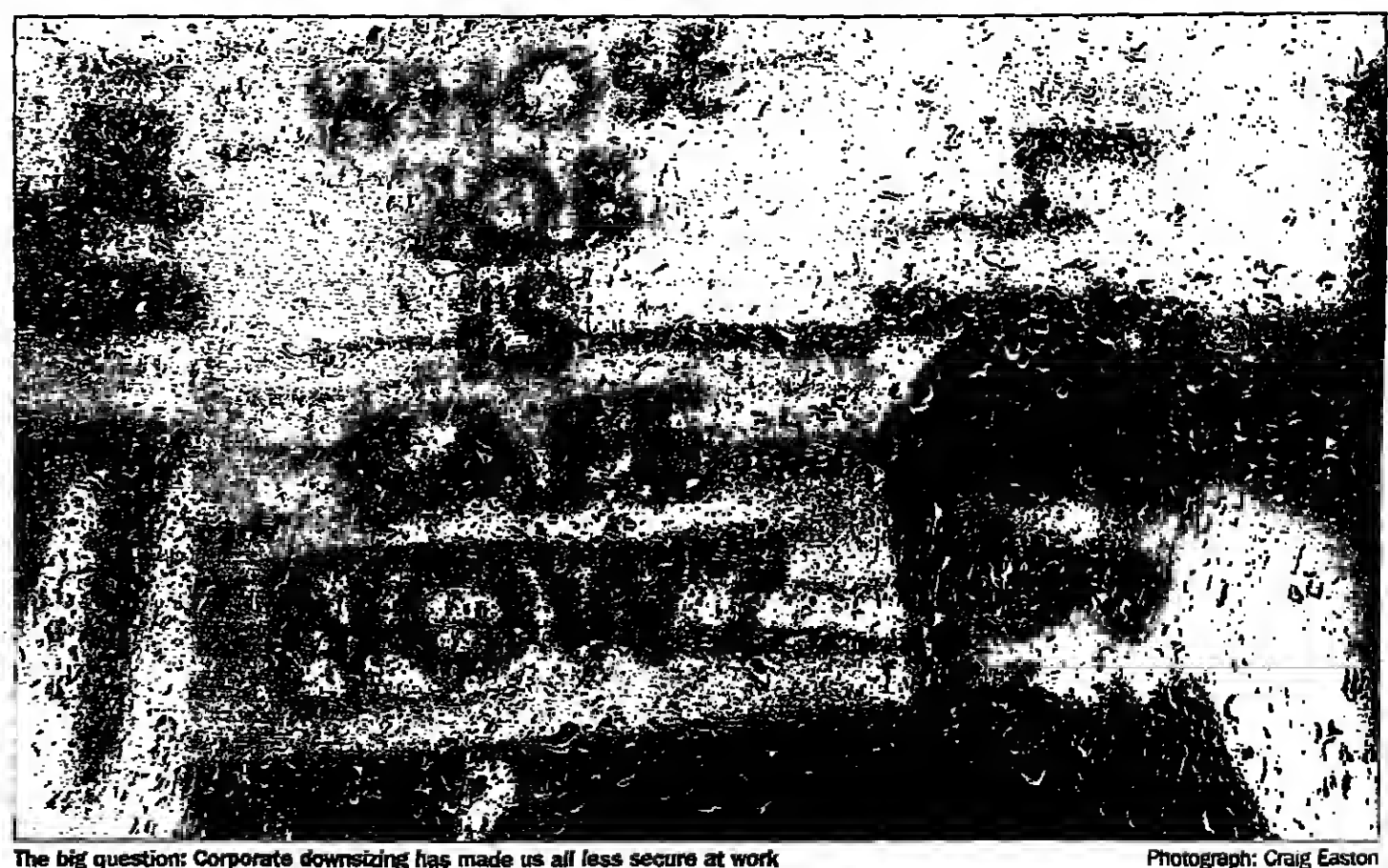
tionally shunned the bookmakers' world of greyhounds and racing - to bet on an immense scale. An estimated 1.5 million people in Britain are now "problem gamblers", according to a Home Office report.

The lottery has thrown up a choice selection of heroes and villains. The discovery that the first recipient of the £17.8m rollover was Asian turned tabloid congratulations into headlines such as "He had £18m in the bank yet he haggled over a suit from Barneys". The odds have a whole new source of material in winners - about whom ex-girlfriends, workmates and parents have lined up to dish the dirt. It was £6.5m winner Lee Ryan who perhaps summed up the spirit of the age. Sentenced to 18 months for handling stolen cars, on his release he disappeared into his £1m mansion, ghost-wrote his life story, became the magnanimous subject of a "kiss and tell" and has not ruled out the possibility of further jail sentences because "you can never say never".

Jojo Moyes

The big question: Corporate downsizing has made us all less secure at work

Photograph: Craig Easton



## Man and machine Caught in the Net, snared by the Web

In the past 10 years, we have unconsciously taken EM Forster's implication - "only connect" - very seriously.

A decade ago, only a few military and academic scientists and experts knew what the Internet was. Hardly anybody had a PC at home, and not that many more could boast one on their desk. Mobile telephones were expensive, heavy items, suitable only for yuppies and builders (one could easily afford them, the other could easily lift them). Science was still struggling to turn the concepts of genetic engineering into processes. Even the brightest scientists had only just realised how you could use a novel laboratory technique called polymerase chain reaction (PCR) on hair and blood samples found at

the scene of crimes. The result - in 1987 - was DNA fingerprinting, now used regularly in trials.

Computers and telecommunications, the keys to connection, have been the decade's two fastest-growing industries. The launch last year of Microsoft's Windows 95 software received more publicity than that of any car, film or rocket. All for a program which did nothing radically new. Except having it, and using it, made people feel they belonged to the emerging information aristocracy.

Paradoxically, while becoming linked up, we have created a world in which we are much less tied down, and where the idea of "place" has almost ceased to have meaning. Almost anybody can now afford a mobile

phone or pager, and use them anywhere across large reaches of the northern hemisphere.

But connection carries a penalty: there is no escape. You may be walking in a mountain range when your phone or pager goes off the office, the boss, your spouse, your best friend wants you. Less the global village, more the global telephone box, with everyone crammed in as if for a student jape. Whatever happened to time off? And whatever happened to the space between places, and being out of reach?

The opening up in 1991 of the Internet to commercial and domestic users around the world has been another destroyer of distance. With the World Wide Web, anywhere

is just as far away as your screen. We don't need to wait for a postman to arrive at the door; we can jack our laptop computer into a telephone socket, wherever we find one (or, failing that, use our mobile phone) and scan our e-mail, which might have a song or a short film attached, fire off notes, "chat" to people in other places, other time zones. As was once said (disparagingly) of Oakland, California, "There's no 'there' there". The same is true, though without the negative connotations, about the Internet.

Communications and computers are also demolishing the idea of a "workplace". You don't need a head office if you carry your talents in your head and a mobile phone in your pocket. Plumbers and drug dealers were

among the first to realise this. The middle classes have been slower to catch on. Work, and the workplace, are changing, now that we can do more things at once.

Science has changed our perceptions of ourselves, too. A technique called PCR, which makes multiple copies of any tiny strip of DNA, has revolutionised our ability to understand ourselves by making it possible to see the functions of individual genes. Do our genes carry our destiny? Should a mother be allowed to demand an abortion on the basis that her child carries genes that might lead to disease? In our networked world, such decisions can never be made alone.

Charles Arthur





Island no more: Whether we like it or not, the Channel Tunnel links us forever with our continental cousins

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Ironies of the tie that binds

It is one of the enduring ironies of the past decade that Margaret Thatcher, despite her antipathy towards both Europe and railways, initiated the construction of a Channel Tunnel to link us with Europe by rail. The tunnel, which finally opened in 1994, is the biggest change since the Victorians began laying railways across Britain or air became a viable method of transport.

The traditional British reserve in embracing innovation means that its full impact has yet to be felt, but the consequences go way beyond the realms of transport. We have a physical link with Europe, ensuring that the political debate on our relationship with the European Union starts from a

different point. Eurotunnel may be just about bankrupt, but the Tunnel will bind us psychologically to Europe in a way that Baroness Thatcher did not appreciate.

While the infrastructure projects are the most visible signs of change in the past decade, Tory policies have transformed the transport structure of the UK.

The bus industry has been deregulated and privatised, resulting in city centres being crowded with ageing buses competing for the lucrative routes while many suburban and rural areas now find themselves without a bus service. And rail privatisation has meant that British Rail is soon to become as

### The tunnel vision

much a part of history as the LNER or the LMS.

The full impact of rail privatisation has also yet to be felt. So far it has resulted only in new logos and a hiatus in investment and a proper assessment of whether the costly upheaval has been worthwhile will have to wait until the end of the decade at least.

In terms of transport, though, there is a development which will have a larger impact on our lives in the years to come than the Channel Tunnel or rail privatisation. It is the sheer growth in the amount of travel which we all undertake.

We are becoming a more and more mobile society. Whereas 10 years ago, each of us travelled on average 5,300 miles per year on land, now we cover 6,500, an increase of 18 per cent. For air transport, the growth figures are even higher. Last year, there were nearly 102 million journeys by people arriving or departing on international flights, exactly double the 1985 figure.

There are many reasons for the increase in transport, but it is largely as a result of the fact that since the Second World War, planning has been centred around the needs of motorists rather than pedestrians.

As more and more houses, as well

as supermarkets, leisure centres and offices, are built on the fringes of towns, a car is usually needed to get to them. The Government allowed the large supermarket companies *corbe blanche* to litter the countryside with barely a thought for the transport problems this would bring in its wake. Now, politicians, even the Tories, have realised that in a small country such as Britain, it is impossible to expand the capacity of the road network to meet the demand, and suddenly bicycles have become the rage, with ministers donning helmets to show the way.

Christian Wolmar

## Green tide just ebbed away

### Mother Earth

A great green wave swept through the late 1980s. It dragged politicians and the media in its wake, boosted membership of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth and deposited so-called 'environment friendly' products all over supermarket shelves. Opinion polls showed threats to the environment were at the top of people's list of concerns.

But it all proved unsustainable, to use a favourite word of the green movement. The wave began to collapse soon after house prices did and continued to fade as the recession deepened; negative equity and mounting unemployment gave people more immediate worries. The Green Party, which won 13 per cent of the vote in the 1989 European Parliament election, became an irrelevance and remains one to this day.

There was a brief, glorious reprise in 1992 with the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, a giant gesture of an event attended by nearly 200 presidents and prime ministers which produced many declarations of good intent. For an entire fortnight the environment was right at the top of the news agenda before sliding away once more.

Yet there has been an underlying shift in our lives. Unleaded petrol has become the norm. We recycle more; taking old newspapers, cans and bottles down to the banks is no longer a



Road to ruin: Protests against the M11 and the Newbury bypass united thousands behind a common cause

Photograph: Brian Harris

minority middle class activity. Industry and local councils are having to implement two major environmental bills enacted during the past six years.

Protecting the planet also costs each family several hundred pounds a year more than it did in 1986, after accounting for inflation. Water bills have risen to finance major improvements in sewage and drinking water treatment. New cars are more expensive partly because they have catalytic converters. The duty on petrol grows by 5 per cent per annum because the Government wants us to drive less and curb pollution (and it also needs the extra revenue). Even the 8 per cent VAT on domestic energy was justified, unconvincedly, as an environmental measure aimed at discouraging wasteful consumption of fossil fuels, the main cause of global warming.

All of these things are much more than mere consequences of the high priority the environment had seven years ago. Attitudes and understanding have changed for good among a substantial chunk of the population. Most people, even highly educated

ones, could not explain the different man-made causes of ozone holes and climate change but they still sense that we ought to at least think about altering our lives. While only a few per cent of Britons have made significant voluntary changes many more, perhaps most, see road building, out-of-town shopping centres and car use as controversial and troubling. That could not have been said ten years ago.

As the economy strengthens and people feel more secure and prosperous in their personal lives their fears for the environment we share are growing once more. The big domestic issues are now traffic, house-building in the countryside (a great construction boom is gathering) and the need to reform the Common Agricultural Policy so that farm subsidies do less harm to what remains of our wildlife. The countryside continues to be swallowed up by urban sprawl and nature is still in retreat, but Britain's air, rivers and seas are certainly cleaner than they were in 1986.

Nicholas Schoon

## Time and motion for body and soul

She was the gatekeeper to the National Health Service and traditionally a bit of a dragon. Her sole aim was to keep you from your doctor unless, she decided, it really was life and death.

But the surgery receptionist of today has been transformed; her worst tendencies tempered by the "Have a Nice Day" mentality that has followed the metamorphosis of patients into consumers.

The receptionist is now a "facilitator" to the brave new world of the modern, primary healthcare-led health service, with its bright, attractive waiting rooms, and play-areas for children; where the dog-eared copies of ancient *Reader's Digest* have been replaced by last week's copy of *Hello*, and where your medical records rarely go missing because they are held on computer.

Family doctors have changed too; jettisoning their paternalistic attitudes to deal with the new breed of patient who has been empowered by the explosion of healthcare information in the last decade and the Patient's Charter. GPs are also more powerful and self-confident, and less in thrall of consultants; they hold the purse strings and hospitals are desperate for business in the internal market created by the NHS changes.

Of course, an appointment with your GP is as difficult to come by as it was in 1986 – marginally less difficult than finding a dentist willing to treat you on the NHS – and rarely available with the GP you want when you are ill. The "drop-in" appointment system no longer exists except for emergencies, and routine night-calls are likely to follow suit.

But your GP may not be the first port of call anyway. Now there is the

### Health of the nation

practice nurse or nurse practitioner, an American innovation designed to reduce doctors' working hours. She (99 per cent are women) can conduct an initial examination, monitor long-term treatments, prescribe certain drugs, order X-rays, carry out smear tests, take samples, give injections and stitch wounds.

The practice nurse has also assumed responsibility for health education and preventive care, a fundamental plank of the Government's *Health of the Nation* strategy which articulated a realisation that stopping people becoming sick was as important as treating them when they did. And persuading them to take responsibility for their own health would also be cheaper in the long-run.

National screening programmes – the first in the world – for breast and cervical cancer have been a pioneering venture but doubts over their real value and cost-effectiveness are still being raised. Detecting more cancers may not in itself save lives, instead it will be the specialist centres set up to deliver the screening and staffed by experts which have the greatest impact in improving every aspect of the treatment and management of a disease.

Hospitals too have undergone some cosmetic changes and are, on the whole, nicer places to be sick in than they were 10 years ago. And even if they are not, you will be spending far less time in them anyway. Pressure on beds and more effective drugs and surgical techniques have cut the average stay by as much as a week.

Liz Hunt

## Market forces at play in the blackboard jungle

When the first edition of *The Independent* was hitting the streets, so were the teachers. A decade ago, the two biggest teaching unions were involved in a bitter dispute over pay which was to spur the Government on to sweeping reform of the entire education system.

A child starting school in the autumn of 1986 would not have crossed a picket line to get to his classroom, but his teacher would probably have headed home at 4pm precisely. The pupil would have been unlikely to be in the school football team because "Sir" was refusing to supervise extra-curricular activities.

The class of '86 did not always wear a uniform, and its teacher did not always wear a tie. Streaming and setting were

rare and the comprehensive ideal reigned supreme. Unfettered by the demands of the National Curriculum and testing, a class was free to spend extra time on a topic its pupils were enjoying.

It would be a mistake, though, to imagine that the mid-Eighties were the educational equivalent of Sixties "free love". Relationships between staff and pupils were more formal than they are now. Corporal punishment had only just been abolished, and teachers were far more authoritarian figures. But teachers did not feel, as they do now, under a new inspection system, that their every move was being scrutinised and that their performance was being judged by results.

The Nineties are the age of com-

### Educating Britain

petition. Competition between schools for pupils, competition for sponsorship, competition to come top of the exam league tables, competition between pupils for places at the best schools.

The National Curriculum, testing, local management and increased parental choice have changed the atmosphere beyond recognition. Where the educational establishment used to loathe any hint of commercialism, it is slowly learning to embrace it.

Today, a pupil's first image of school may be the smart new logo over the door. Inside the polished lobby stands a besuited headteacher hearing a glossy brochure all about the school

and waiting to shake his parents' hands. The child is likely to be in uniform, even in a comprehensive.

In the classrooms, this new slickness tends to evaporate. There are more pupils per teacher, less money to spend on maintenance, and worksheets instead of textbooks. An iron grip is kept on budgets, which schools now manage themselves. Pupils are under intense pressure to do well in national tests which start at seven. Setting and streaming are more common, and primary school teachers are more likely to stand at the front and lecture than supervise group work.

In 1986, many schools did not welcome daytime visits from parents. Now, they encourage them – up to a

point. Staff need all the volunteer help they can get, with reading, fund-raising and lifts to school sports matches. But teachers still do not welcome interference from newly empowered parents who believe that they know what is best for their children.

And when the class of '86 reach higher education in another three years, what will they find? More of the same, but with knobs on. School class sizes may have grown, but with university expansion, tutorial groups have ballooned. The logos, smart suits and glossy brochures are there too, but the contrast between this and the poverty in which students often live is acute.

Fran Abrams

## Days of our lives

### THE INDEPENDENT

#### Hundreds die as jumbo jet plunges into town



World's worst plane disaster

### THE INDEPENDENT

#### Passenger jet crashes on M1



Chaos after a jumbo jet crash

### THE INDEPENDENT

#### Clapham Junction



### THE INDEPENDENT

#### Key to fans' deaths lies in policing



Helpless grief and anger of city that never walks alone

### THE INDEPENDENT

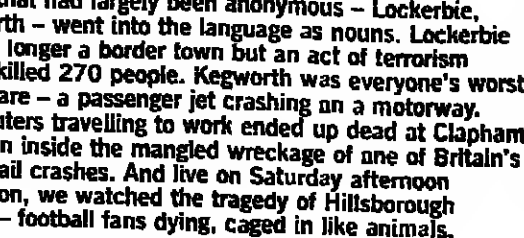
#### Four hours of devastation



Generations of giants lost in one night

### THE INDEPENDENT

#### US ponders retaliation for Gulf missile attack



Wall Street takes a record tumble

There seemed to be a disaster every month in that six-month period of late 1988 and early 1989. Names of towns that had largely been anonymous – Lockerbie, Kegworth – went into the language as nouns. Lockerbie was no longer a border town but an act of terrorism which killed 270 people. Kegworth was everyone's worst nightmare – a passenger jet crashing on a motorway. Commuters travelling to work ended up dead at Clapham Junction inside the mangled wreckage of one of Britain's worst rail crashes. And live on Saturday afternoon television, we watched the tragedy of Hillsborough unfold – football fans dying, caged in like animals.



Dublin summit: Monetary union on course and reforms to enable expansion planned as officials discuss fiscal 'nuclear deterrent'

## Britain faces £700m EU fine

KATHERINE BUTLER  
Dublin  
DIANE COYLE

European Union leaders have renewed their pledge to sign an ambitious new treaty overhauling the structures and powers of the EU by the middle of next year.

Meeting in Dublin at the weekend, they reaffirmed their commitment to wrapping up a deal on treaty reforms to meet the challenge of expansion eastward, in time for a June 1997 deadline they set in Florence earlier this year.

Restatement of their determination to stick to the timetable will hardly discourage speculation that Franco-German ambitions for political integration are being scaled down, to concentrate minds on preparations for the launch of monetary union in 1999 and to avoid a protracted battle with Britain.

But in public at any rate, John Major's fellow leaders were at pains to insist that the reforms they want entered in the treaty, to be signed in Amsterdam next summer, are anything but cosmetic. Brushing aside the British Prime Minister's latest objections, they moved closer to agreement on incorporating a legal commitment to tackling unemployment in the revised treaty, while the French and

German premiers spoke of growing consensus on the need to strengthen the EU's foreign policy and its powers to deal with crime, drugs and terrorism.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany dismissed as "absurd" suggestions that he was prepared to accept any slackening in the pace of reforms. His remarks last week on a possible "Maastricht 3" negotiation, to come after the current round of treaty talks, were widely interpreted as a signal of his acceptance that the drive to deepen political integration will have to be put on the back burner.

Mr Major listed defence, the common fishing policy, Britain's opt out from the social chapter and measures to tackle unemployment as the areas where Britain could veto progress in the treaty talks. He confirmed that Britain would continue to play a full part in negotiations about the single currency.

The Germans have won the intellectual battle over the stability pact, originally proposed by Finance Minister, Theo Waigel. Officials are negotiating details of the pact, that will ensure that governments keep a tight rein on their budgets after they join the single currency. The Germans have proposed fines for countries whose deficits exceed the 3 per cent of Gross

Domestic Product ceiling set by the Maastricht treaty.

The fines are intended to act as the fiscal equivalent of a nuclear deterrent. The proposed levels are high enough to ensure that members would go all out to stay under the limit.

Although still under debate, there is likely to be a flat rate fine for passing the 3 per cent level, plus a component for every extra percentage point of GDP by which revenues fall short of expenditures, up to a ceiling. The proposed structure is like paying a flat charge for an overdraft, plus a percentage of the amount overdrawn.

For the UK or Italy, the level of fine being discussed is about £700m, plus £700m for every percentage point of GDP by which the government was in the red. For a bigger economy like France it would be approaching £1bn initially plus £1bn for every percentage point of deficit. The figures are equivalent to 0.1 per cent of GDP.

Fines on this scale are likely to be acceptable to potential EMU members as long as they are never be incurred in practice. The principle of a stability pact is nevertheless accepted by potential members of the single currency, all of whom recognise the importance of reducing their deficits relative to the size of their economies.



Scene of the crime: French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé (centre), inspecting bomb damage to Bordeaux's town hall yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

## Bomb explodes in protest against Juppé

IAN PHILLIPS  
Paris

The bomb which devastated part of Bordeaux's town hall late on Saturday evening is being seen as a protest against French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, who is also mayor of the city.

An incendiary device placed on the steps which lead from the

18th-century building's Salon of Honour, where Mr Juppé receives guests, exploded at 11.45pm, only a few hours after his departure for Paris.

Mr Juppé had spent much of Friday and Saturday in Bordeaux in meetings. The powerful explosion ripped out windows of the first three floors of the town hall as well as those of neighbouring houses.

The bomb claimed no victims, but it caused extensive damage to the panelling, floor and paintings in the Salon of Honour, where the gala dinner of the next Franco-British summit, planned for 7-8 November, between John Major and French President Jacques Chirac was to be held. Mr Juppé, who returned to Bordeaux yesterday morning to

inspect the damage, expressed his "indignation" at the attack and immediately called a meeting with his justice and interior ministers for later today. "We are very attached to this building, which is a symbol," he said. "But I am not a man who lets himself be intimidated."

The leader of the Socialist opposition of the Bordeaux municipal council, Gilles Savary, said he believed the attack was directed neither at Bordeaux nor at Mr Juppé, but rather at "the head of the government". No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, and no advance warning was given. However, the fact that traces of plastic and dynamite were found seems to more or less rule out Basque terrorists, who have been active in the region.

## Professor's dogged pursuit of truth brings justice

It's not easy being an investigative journalist caught in the limelight of success. No matter how satisfactory the plaudits from public and peers for a job well done, the resulting high-profile makes doing the job tricky.

"You can't sneak up on anybody," lamented David Protes, a journalism professor at Chicago's Northwestern University and advocacy journalist who specialises in miscarriages of justice cases.

Mr Protes became the toast of Chicago this summer, appearing on television shows and in *People* magazine and the *New York Times*, following the release of four men known as the Ford Heights Four from Illinois' Death Row after a spending a combined 65 years in prison. The men, all black, were wrongfully convicted of murdering a young white couple from Chicago's Ford Heights neighbourhood in 1978. To bring their innocence to

### Local hero David Protes

light, Mr Protes, a team of students in his investigative journalism class, and a private investigator combed police files, court records and interviewed witnesses and the defendants. Their investigation turned up a sordid tale of sloppy police work, overzealous prosecutors, racism and poverty.

This autumn Mr Protes is teaching another undergraduate investigative journalism class, whose projects include research into the Ford Heights Four case for a book Mr Protes will write in the coming year. They will also help the professor investigate a new case of apparent wrongful conviction. Mr Protes was reluctant to discuss the case, citing the need for a low profile to accomplish his task.

He would reveal that the case is in the Midwest and involves several people incarcerated for a crime they probably did not commit.

Mr Protes is also the author of a book about a previous case of wrongful conviction he helped overturn. *Gone in the Night*, the story of a young couple convicted of the murder of their young daughter and later acquitted, was made into a mini-series on CBS television. Mr Protes wrote the book with Chicago reporter/editor Rob Warden, with whom he will

work again on the Ford Heights book.

In his new book Mr Protes says he will be "exploring the lessons the case hold about media, racism, the death penalty and the workings of the criminal justice system". A movie deal for the account has been signed. Mr Protes makes no profit from these projects. He says simply, "I am paid a salary at Northwestern University to teach investigative journalism. The money goes to charitable causes."

This attitude and some other differences of opinion led to a falling out between the professor and his students. Mr Protes, who has a reputation for getting very involved in his cases, felt he and his students should not profit from their work. The three primary investigative students, after consulting lawyers, felt they had earned the right to take cuts of the movie deal. They also disagreed with Mr Protes's requests that they hand information they gained over to the authorities. They felt they had conducted the investigation as journalists, not as arms of the prosecutors' office.

Despite the emotional toll these tragic cases take, Mr Protes does not foresee hanging up his tape recorder and word processor after this case. "This is my life's work," he said. "Sure, there are countless miscarriages of justice. I just hope I can be part of correcting them."

Elizabeth Wine

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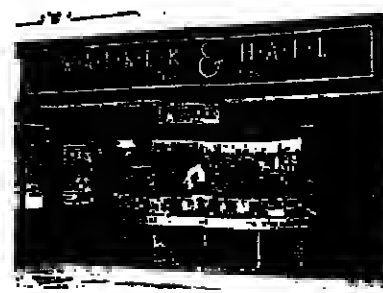
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# Iceland sweats as volcano burns away Europe's biggest glacier



Bursting out: The 3km-high column of steam and ash above Loki volcano. Photograph: Sigurdur Adalsteinsson-Morgunbladid

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Editor

Iceland remained on full alert yesterday as a continuing eruption of the Loki volcano beneath Europe's largest glacier threatened to cause widespread flooding along the south coast.

Anticipating that a massive and potentially deadly torrent of water could be unleashed, Icelanders reinforced freshly built barriers along river banks and prepared to dig channels through roads in the threatened region. The aim is to limit any damage to bridges, power stations and telephone lines.

The eruption of the volcano, which was last active in 1938, has continued for a week, while the level of water that has been melted beneath the glacier by the hot magma has reached its highest level this century. If a fresh eruption breaks up the glacier cap, the water will run to the sea, devastating anything in its path.

This could be more dangerous than standard volcanic eruptions because the column of water will move much faster than molten rock, or lava.

Pall Inslund, a geologist at the University of Iceland, said: "As soon as we know that the water has begun to flow, we'll start to dig through the road to try and save the glaciers on the central plain in front of the glacier." The uninhabited Vat-

The main threat from the volcanic eruption is the release of the millions of gallons of melted water below the glacier cap which is at its highest level this century.



najokull glacier lies in south-east Iceland, 120 miles east of Reykjavik and roughly the same distance south of the Arctic Circle. It is separated from the coast by a fringe of farmland, where farmers have been warned to take their livestock into shelter to reduce the danger from toxic gases thrown off by the eruption.

Scientists monitoring the eruption at the Vatnajökull ice sheet reckon that the present activity probably began on Tuesday, and that about two cubic kilometres of water and debris had collected under the glacier. Professor Inslund said: "The reservoir is filling very fast. We're just waiting for the starting mechanism of the flood, which is a process we

don't really understand." Seismic monitors showed a steady pattern of tremors.

The original eruption at the Grimsvotn crater, which started on Wednesday, burst through some 600m of ice, spewing a column of steam and

"water glacier", originates from the large lakes and rivers under its ice sheet, which are created from the ice melted by the heat of the underlying volcano. In 1938 an eruption at exactly the same site as the present one caused massive flooding.

If a fresh eruption breaks up the glacier cap, the water will run to the sea, devastating anything in its path

ash up to 10km high. The column has since subsided to between one and 3km. Aircraft are being diverted around it.

The Vatnajökull glacier stretches over 8,300sq kms and in parts reaches a depth of 1,000m. Its name, which means

Iceland is a comparatively active volcanic area of northern Europe, and has not escaped the consequences. In 1973, the eruption of a volcano near the sea town of Heimaey opened a fissure 1,600m long fissure on the east side of the island,

## Hundreds flee threatened port

Government officials in Papua New Guinea said yesterday that about 300 people had left the port town of Rabaul since Friday after one of two active volcanoes erupted, spewing ash 4,000 metres into the air and opening a new lava chasm.

Rabaul, on New Britain island - 800 kilometres north-east of the Papua New Guinea capital Port

Moresby - was devastated in September 1994, when the two volcanoes on either side of the town erupted, forcing the evacuation of its 30,000 residents.

Five people died during evacuation and subsequent attempts to return to the town over the next few days to rescue belongings from gangs of looters.

spouting lava in glowing fountains up to 150m high. The activity continued for six months, by the end of which 417 houses had been destroyed by lava and the remainder of the town was submerged in 250 cubic metres of material

produce volcanic vents. In most cases these are relatively harmless, though sometimes the volcanic gases can be poisonous, and the pyroclastic flows - combinations of heated earth, mud and rock - can demolish anything in their path. Europe has a number of such volcanic hot spots, including a number in Italy, but it is the sea bed which provides the majority of volcanic weaknesses.

One of the biggest problems faced by volcanologists, and echoing that of seismologists attempting to deal with earthquakes, is prediction. Volcanoes, like seismic faults, may lie quiescent for years before abruptly bursting into life again.

## significant shorts

### Bus crashes kill 73 in South Africa

Seventy-three people were killed in two road accidents on Saturday, reinforcing South Africa's reputation for horrific transport accidents involving buses.

A head-on collision between a hired bus, taking mourners to a funeral, and a diesel tanker claimed 38 lives north of Pretoria. About 30 people were injured. A few hours later, in the Eastern Cape, a tour bus overturned, killing 35 people. *Mary Braid - Johannesburg*

### Flotilla sets sail to make island protest

About 140 activists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan prepared to set sail in the largest attempt so far to evade Japanese patrols and land on islands in the East China Sea claimed by China and Japan. The activists planned to set sail aboard 31 fishing boats from the northern ports of Shenzhou and Wanni for the islands, known in Japanese as the Senkakus and in Chinese as Diaoyu. A banner reading "Diaoyu is a Chinese territory" hung from the command boat. *AP - Keelung, Taiwan*

### Police search Belgian mine

Belgian police stepped up the search of an abandoned mine tunnel in the southern town of Jumet after Marc Dutroux, the chief suspect in a multiple child-murder case, indicated something was hidden there. Police said Dutroux had given no indication of what they might find, but Belgian television reported specialists in corpse identification were at the scene. *AP - Brussels*

### Croats stage walk-out

Bosnian Croats walked out of a session of Sarajevo's newly-elected cantonal assembly, demanding guarantees from the main Muslim party to protect the rights of the city's Croat community. The move illustrated the poor state of relations inside Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation, which has failed to make political progress since it was founded two years ago. *Reuters - Sarajevo*

### Extremists 'joined CDU'

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) vowed they would take action if a magazine report that Muslim extremists have infiltrated Germany's ruling party proved to be correct. *Der Spiegel* says today that members of a group named Milli Gorus, classed by Germany's anti-extremist watchdog as "Islamic extremists", had joined the party in several cities. *Reuters - Bonn*

### Climbers die on Annapurna

Two American climbers died in an avalanche while attempting to scale the Mount Annapurna in Nepal. A Royal Nepal Army Helicopter rescued a third climber. *Reuters - Kathmandu*

### Baby dies in ritual killing

A newborn baby found beheaded in a Lagos street may be another victim of a series of ritual killings, a newspaper reported. *The Sunday Concord* said a nurse found the baby girl, umbilical cord still attached, in a pool of blood on Friday near the Ikaja Hospital. Last month two women were found in the same suburb with their eyes gouged out and breasts and foreheads cut open, apparently the victims of ritual killers. *AP - Lagos*

### N Korea holds American

North Korea, accused of sending a submarine to land spies in rival South Korea, said it had arrested an American who was spying for the South. The North Korean news agency said Evan Hwang, who was arrested on 24 August when he entered the country from China. The US embassy in Seoul had no comment. *AP - Seoul*

Supermarkets checked out by trading standards officers. Page 22

## Taliban launch house-to-house search for weapons ... and TVs

TIM MCGIRK  
Kabul

With music and television banned by the Taliban militia in Kabul, schools closed, women forbidden from working and a curfew in force, most Afghans have no choice but to turn on the radio after 6pm and brace themselves for the latest bizarre decree issued by their new Islamic rulers.

Kite flying has been prohibited, along with marbles, large wedding parties, picnics and owning songbirds. Beauty shops have all been shut down, and so have the gyms. "What are we supposed to be doing when we're not praying five times a day at the mosque? Memorising the Koran, I guess," one Kabul student said glumly.

The latest communiqué by ra-

dio has worried Kabul residents the most. It warned that Taliban militiamen would be going from house to house confiscating weapons (many Afghans had guns at home to scare off bandits).

Seizing weapons may seem reasonable to Afghans, since the Taliban's decision to remove the foot of any thief who is caught has cut down crime. But the militia also have instructions from the Department of Good and Abstaining from Bad to search houses and seize televisions and music and video cassettes. One former Communist, hasty trying to grow his beard, said: "We've fallen into a black hole, 500 years back in history."

Many of the Taliban militia are armed with quivers of rocket-propelled grenades are

without any schooling, except the Koran. Their leaders are clerics who are imposing an Islamic regime in Kabul harsher than anywhere else in the Muslim world.

A Taliban cleric, Mullah Mohammed Ghous Akhund, said the ban on women working and girls going to school, would be lifted once "full security prevails". But towns such as Kandahar and Herat, captured by the Taliban over a year ago, are fully secure, yet Afghans are still waiting for girls' schools to be reopened and nurses to be allowed back in hospitals.

The Taliban forces are sweeping north into the Hindu Kush mountains, about 120 miles from the capital, where the former Defence Minister, Ahmed Shah Massoud, has retreated. Nicknamed the "Lion

of the Pantheon" for his valiant defence of the Pantheon valley against the Soviet army, Mr Massoud has gone back to the craggy mountains he and his men know best.

Attacking with heavy artillery, backed by fighter aircraft and helicopter gunships, over the past three days the Taliban have succeeded in penetrating three miles into the valley. The Afghans think Mr Massoud stands no chance of ever winning back Kabul.

Flushed by their conquest of Kabul, the Taliban may next aim for the northern domain of the Uzbek warlord, Abdurrahid Dostum. However, Mr Dostum has powerful allies in the Central Asian republics, and these former Communist regimes have warned the Taliban not to push too far.

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WORLDWIDE



# Forget dogma, find out what really works

For all the parliamentary alarm of the past few days, British government is in good nick – in the sense that when ministers order something, it generally gets done, however ill thought out it may be. But good government, in a complicated society such as ours, is empirical government, based on what works best on the ground, not what fits the theory. The signs are that we are about to see an instance of bad government. The case in point is pre-school provision where, we report today, the results of a useful experiment in providing nursery places are about to be cast aside because they do not fit the ideologues' script. Nursery vouchers threaten to end up as a tale of misgovernment that can only feed the prevalent mood of dismay at the way Britain is ruled.

As long ago as 1972 politicians were promising significant improvements in the supply of places for three- and four-year-old children in "nurseries" – a catch-all for playgroups, infant school reception classes, dedicated nursery schools. (That date is not chosen at random, of course; it was when a Tory education secretary called Margaret Thatcher promised a free nursery place for all children.) Since then, demand has significantly risen. Many more women now work outside the home full- or part-time. Many more parents are concerned that, before starting formal school, their children have

acquired useful habits of learning and living with other children. Meanwhile debate has raged over what should be the balance between teaching young children, say, numbers or letters, and merely caring for them in a stimulating but non-academic environment: the former surely demands a trained teacher; the latter could be carried out perfectly well by a much cheaper kind of carer. Parents are the best judges of how soon schooling ought to take place. They will differ – which is all the more reason pre-school provision should be a variegated and local mixture of public, private and voluntary sectors rather than some uniform national scheme.

As the Government's own Green Paper of August acknowledged, British employers have shown themselves remarkably uninterested in developing child care at work even when offered tax incentives. As a stream of think-tank papers – not all of them from the loony right – have pointed out, fiscal conditions for families have deteriorated. All of this adds up to a strong case for increased public support for care/education for children of three and four outside their homes. The remarkable thing is that on that proposition there is not only a huge national consensus but clear agreement between the principal political parties.

But instead of building on consensus, what we have is deliberate divisiveness

(and Labour must carry its share of the blame for that). For many years the right has been fixated by vouchers. Advanced as the panacea for every educational ill, the right's belief has been that in their role as educators of their children parents were ultimately like buyers of groceries. But the heart of the voucher case is that parental pressures will call forth new and better schools. Unexpectedly the Tory voucherists were given a chance to see their dream realised in pre-school provision. In theory this ought to be fertile ground for them. It should be easier for private businesses to set up nurseries than full-blown schools sub-



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jected to stricter quality controls. But even ideologues realised that no one quite knew how parental choice would work, especially in conditions where there was effectively no extra money and the vouchers were going to be paid for by subtracting from the educational grants already paid to local authorities. So we have had a pilot scheme, which started in four local areas in April. The novelty and value of such an experiment can hardly be exaggerated and Labour councils were, typically, blinkered in refusing to take part. How often in recent years has some great national policy been pro-

mulgated – the poll tax being the key example – without being tested locally in the diverse conditions of how people actually live? Gillian Shephard, who has shown herself to be a flexible and capable education and employment minister, should have been able to learn from the local outcomes in order, one might have thought, make her own eventual national policy more effective.

But no. That is not how modern government under the Tories works. Nursery vouchers were tested in Westminster and Wandsworth, Tory controlled local authorities that would bend over backwards for the sake of the party. But even they have reported major problems. Voucher money has not produced extra places, and that is despite various sweeteners and incentives. There are also real difficulties in ensuring that what is offered is any good. Take-up has been unpredictable.

None of that means the idea of vouchers is vanquished. What it does say, strongly, is that a period of evaluation and further thought is now called for. If Gillian Shephard were an honest politician sincerely concerned for the well being of children now and into the future, she would already have tried to maximise the common ground between her and Labour's David Blunkett. What she must do now is pause, regroup and abandon that party selfishness which wants to embed a controversial policy before the general

election. The experiment has a further six months to run. Let it run its course. Gillian Shephard should look up a paper published today by the Tories' very own Centre for Policy Studies which says clearly, no names, no pack-drill, that in recent years public policies have too often been badly drafted and ill prepared. Nursery vouchers ought not to be another example.

## Over to Skye, democratically

Tolls are high on the new bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh over the sea to Skye. They are higher than the Forth and Erskine Bridges, higher even than the newer Severn crossing to and from Wales. They have been set to show private investors that they can get their money back from public infrastructure projects quickly. But does all that add up to the basis of a lawsuit? The non-payment cases going ahead this week in Edinburgh at the Court of Session and in Dingwall Sheriff Court will delight constitutionalists as well as criminal lawyers. But the question of who pays for a much-needed bridge is not ultimately one for judges. Issues of cost and benefit are the very stuff of democratic politics, to be resolved in parliaments and national assemblies, not courts of law.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Trust's ballot secrecy due to class divide

Sir: Earl Kitchener and John Wilks are certainly not alone in their uneasiness about the secretive nature of the National Trust's ruling council (letter, 3 October).

I must be one of many among the Trust's 2.3 million members, not among the Great and the Good, who noted that the council recommends us to vote against the motion calling for open statement about the numbers of mandated and unmandated votes cast by the chairman.

The rationale given by the Trust is that we should not expect to be given details of how members vote, and have no right to. The council cites the opinion of Lord Oliver of Aylmerton, a former Law Lord, in justification.

But we all know that Law Lords often disagree with each other, and I feel quite justified in disagreeing with the view of his Lordship. We are not asking for any breach of a secret ballot, only to know total votes cast in various categories. In any government election, local or national, we are provided with numbers of votes cast for each candidate, and can thus assess how much support a particular party or policy attracts, regardless of whether the votes are cast in person, by proxy or by post. As I read the motion, it asks for no more than this. Despite the recommendation of the council, I have already voted for the motion.

I am increasingly concerned that the governance of the largest and wealthiest charity in England and Wales which, according to its centenary publicity, is "for everyone, for ever" – is at best benevolently paternal and at worst downright patronising. It is from long-term members like myself, deeply appreciative of much of what the trust does, that a large part of its income is derived; and to be treated with the mixture of patronage and disdain once reserved for "loyal servants" or "peasantry" sets my teeth on edge. This latest recommendation is only the last of many examples of such elitist disregard for those of us (ie most of us) who are not at the top table.

Should we be surprised? An analysis of the Trust's governing council, numbering 52 members including chairman and Deputy, is illuminating: the majority represent county land-owning interests, 15 per cent are titled, 30 per cent also sit on the executive committee (26 per cent of these are titled) and 6 are also regional chairmen.

On any demographic analysis the trust's council and executive are ludicrously non-representative of the modern population – and alarmingly representative of a small group with shared vested interests.

I looked in vain for names I recognised in the arts, natural sciences, architecture and engineering, who bring enthusiasm for their fields to the general populace. They are not there. Perhaps "populism" is also disdained? I assume these areas are represented and, I have no doubt, by honourable men and women; but where are the best-known, most creative and innovative shapers of change and wise conservation in our society? Not, apparently, on the trust's ruling body. It is surely time some of them were.

It is also time to dispense with the paternalism and patronage of



an aristocratic, land-owning clique in the administration of a great and trail-blazing charity. It was initiated to care for our common landscapes and our common history, not to perpetuate the attitudes, values and behaviours of Whig grandees.

I am delighted that "one of their own" has been moved to ask for more openness. We groundlings need to go further, to ask loudly and often from whom the council of the trust derives its power, in whose interests it is exercised, and to whom it is accountable; and if the answers are unacceptable in a modern democracy, to change both the constitution and the governing personnel of the Trust by any rational, democratic means open to us.

LESLEY WEBB  
Rothbury, Northumberland

### The Mini is older than you think

Sir: Your article "Mini shapes up for the 21st century" (2 October) perpetuates the myth that the vehicle first appeared in 1959. I passed my driving test in October 1957 driving an Austin Mini owned by the BSM of Croydon. I still have my old diary and driving licence recording the fact.

Does anyone know why the makers persist in dating the first two years of this little car's existence? I still remember the cable-operated door locks on the first series, and the fact that I was sitting about three feet lower than in my own car, a Wolseley 2-litre made in 1929.

PETER J DENSEHAM  
Addlestone, Surrey

### EMU will go way of split Germany

Sir: The painful problems being encountered with the unification of the economies of the old East and West Germanies ("Union leaves Germans divided", 4 October) are a paradigm for the much larger structural upheavals that Europe would face with monetary union.

East Germany was an isolated state with its own currency. Its industries were uncompetitive in world terms, but thrived. People had a job. People could afford life's necessities because they were produced within the same economy. East German goods were cheap and could be readily bought by outsiders. The only real problem for East Germany was that it could not afford expensive imports.

Now, the factories of the East have laid off thousands of workers and still cannot produce goods of sufficiently high quality at a competitive price. Large sections of the population struggle to survive on benefits provided at great expense to the state and causing great resentment to those in the West. Nobody feels better off, and this is with a central government that has the will and the capability to direct the redistribution of funds and the rebuilding of the economy. The people of the East have the German mark but cannot earn enough of them to prosper.

What chance then for EMU? Without a strong central government and a merging of vastly

differing economies, there is no chance of seeing the long-term stability and planning that give the Germans hope for their future. Are we willing to see millions more unemployed throughout Europe and to pay for this through higher taxes? Do we wish to lose our cheap Mediterranean holiday playgrounds?

I am surprised that so many people seriously believe in monetary union, given the example of Germany. All that pain to give more certainty to traders (try hedging) and more convenience to travellers (use your UK cashcard in European ATMs). For the time being, let the nations of Europe simply try to understand each other more, appreciate each other's cultures, trade more freely, and not get over-ambitious.

DAVID MILLER  
Norwich

### Code conundrum

Sir: I am surprised to see your leading article "Spies show their intelligence" (2 October) comparing the US government's encryption proposals to Cold War intelligence gathering. No foreign power or international terrorist is going to deposit decryption keys with a third party, or use software that insists on this. The only people who will do so, and hence the only people who can be spied upon, will be law-abiding citizens and corporations in friendly nations.

PAUL BRATTON  
London W5

### Royal Archers right for Stone

Sir: You report that HM Chiefs of Staff cannot agree on who is to escort King Fergus McEric's Coronation Stone to its new abode (30 September). The appropriate regiment is surely the very antique Royal Company of Archers.

Green-liveried and armed with longbows, they form the Queen's personal bodyguard when she is in Scotland.

Their English equivalent are the Life Guards, whose colonel holds the office of Gold Stick for England. On, say, the bridge at Coldstream, he could formally surrender the Stone to the Captain General of the Archers, who is Gold Stick for Scotland.

Your assertion that "some 30 British monarchs" have been crowned over the Stone is inaccurate. To date there have been 18 "Britannic Majesties" of whom just six used this coronation chair. Before 1830, a baroque throne was in use.

The gilded wooden chair containing the Stone may itself have a 12th or 13th-century Scottish provenance. The lions at the base are striking. Fitting guardians of the throne of King William the Lion? Had Edward I commissioned it, he would surely have incorporated his own heraldic motifs, leopards, etc. Modern dating techniques might prove conclusively.

DAVID HAMILTON  
Edinburgh

### Genetic clues to cancer

Sir: With reference to your article "Islanders may hold gene clue to cancer" (27 September), I am, in fact, the doctor at St Mark's Hospital to whom you refer.

May I correct some minor mistakes that have crept into the article. I work for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and not the International Cancer Research Fund. Also, I am funded by Imperial Cancer and not by Marie Curie Cancer Research.

I am not aware of any evidence to support your statement that HNPCC-related cancers are increasing with every generation. In fact, these genes have only just been identified and we have no precise data on their frequency.

You say that one-sixth of all cancers in Finland can be traced back to a single village. However, the Finnish data actually shows that about one-sixth of their HNPCC families all carry the same distinctive HNPCC gene mutation. Moreover, that this mutation arose as a single event that can be traced back to a founder in a Finnish village in the mid-1600s.

Dr IAN M FRAYLING  
St Mark's Hospital  
Harrow, London

### Beat that

Sir: Further to Andrew Peto's letter (5 October), Clifton can claim three Nobel Prize winners: Sir John Kendrew (1962, Chemistry), Sir John Hicks (1972, Economics) and Sir Nevill Martin (1977, Physics).

TOM GOVER  
The Old Cliftonian Society  
Bristol

### Daughter killed by paracetamol

Sir: We fully support Sir David Carter's call for a ban on paracetamol ("Ban pain drug says leading surgeon", 1 October). Our 19-year-old daughter died earlier this year after taking between 10 and 20 tablets. Her death occurred because she was unaware of the fatal consequences of an overdose. The drug companies do not provide this information on their products.

We have written to a major drug company and spoken to the Minister for Health on this subject. They are neither convinced paracetamol is unsafe, nor prepared to reduce the death toll from this drug by taking the measures outlined by Sir David. Our grief is exacerbated by the bitterness we feel. The fatal effect of a paracetamol overdose has been apparent for many years. An antidote has been available for 10 years. Our daughter and many like her need not have died had the drug companies, the Medicines Control Agency or the Government listened to the many people who have campaigned over the years for safer paracetamol.

How many more young people are going to die before action is taken? MAUREEN and PETER LUKE  
Daventry, Northamptonshire

Sir: Unfortunately, Sir David Carter does not have the answer to deliberate self-poisoning. It is widely recognised that removing the method simply has at best only a transient effect on the number of people attempting suicide. They will simply turn to something else.

Fortunately, over 30 million people each year in the UK use paracetamol safely and properly, with only a tiny minority using it for overdose, and even then over 99 per cent recover completely. With many other medicines fatal in overdose, death ensues far more rapidly than with paracetamol.

Sir David Carter, as a liver surgeon, comes into contact with the small number of people who do suffer liver failure and perhaps his response is natural, but while his suggestions would have the effect of removing those patients from his liver unit, they would simply overdose on something else and it is highly likely they would end up in the morgue instead.

Dr GEOFFREY BRANDON  
Paracetamol Information Centre  
London SE1

### Niff of Constable

Sir: James Hughes (Letters, 4 October) denies that "the pong in the countryside" has been around for as long as farming has existed. I ask him to look at any Constable picture of rural life and imagine what it actually smells like.

If this feat of imagination does not suffice, try visiting two fields – one recently fertilised out of the bag and the other with cattle or pig manure. Modern agri-business and intensive farming may or may not be "a good thing". But the associated odours are a fraction of those generated by traditional (largely organic) farming.

J A ANDERSON  
Carshalton, Surrey

Sir: According to the shorter Oxford dictionary, the word "sny" (as in "pig-sny") is Old English. I don't suppose medieval pig manure smelt very different from the modern version. Does Mr Hughes realise that organic (family) manure?

N DAVISON  
Compton, Devon

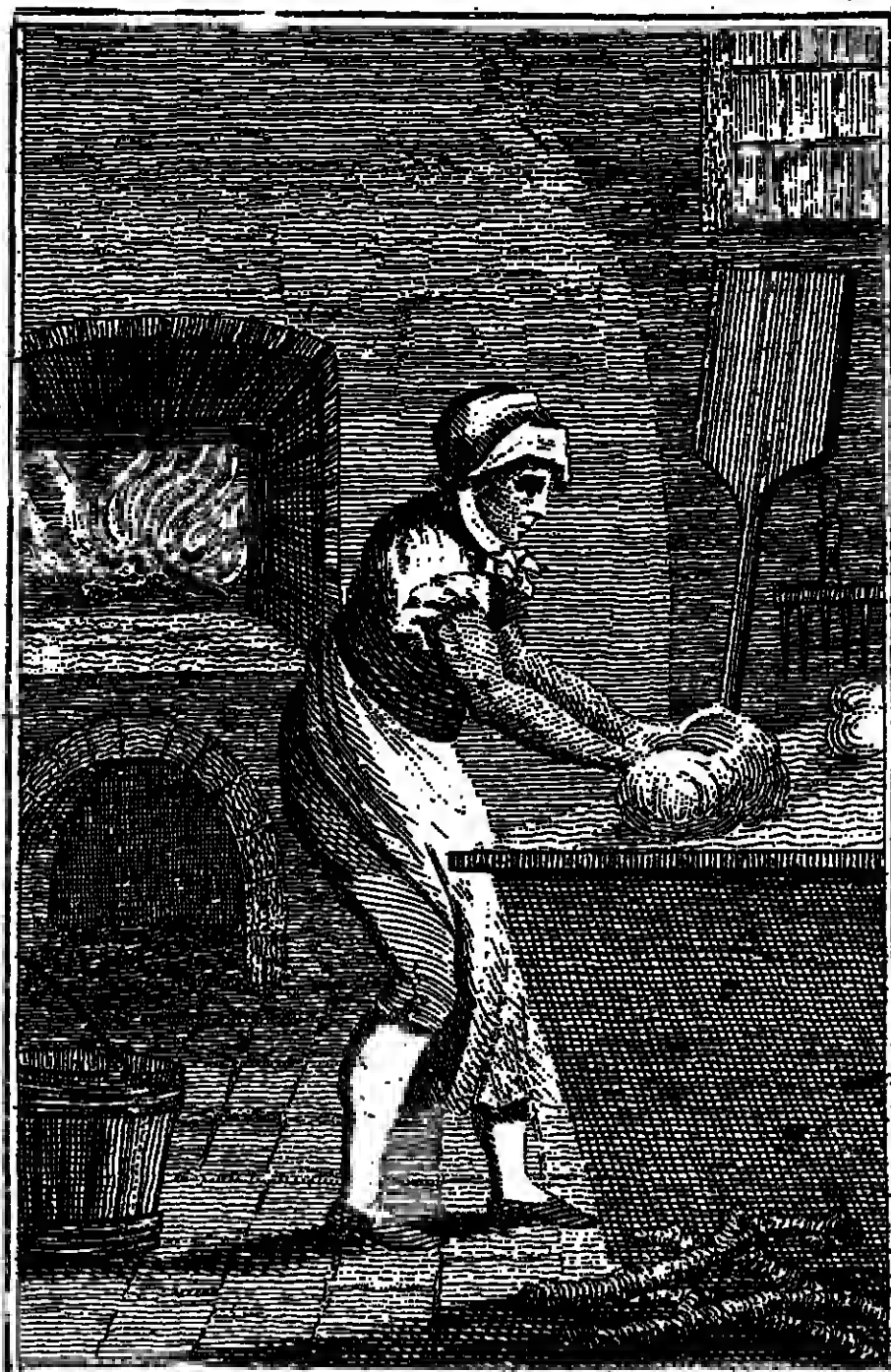
Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.  
(Fax: 0171-293 2036; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk)

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## essay

Today, things get tougher for dole cheats with the introduction of the job seekers' allowance. More importantly, workfare is waiting in the wings. Polly Toynbee watches a pilot scheme in action...



How many jobs has she applied for each week? Four, she claims, a bit too pat. Ms Clark checks her computer and points out that Heather has not applied for jobs at the Job Centre since May. "I apply from newspaper ads," Heather protests mildly.

Together they trawl through the computer's list of jobs in the area. Heather turns her nose up at Kwiksave but looks mildly interested in Debenhams. Ms Clark prints out a list of jobs and telephones several employers to arrange interviews, promising to call her at home to find out how they went. If she was Garry's enemy, she appears to be Heather's helpful friend.

It is plainly beginning to dawn on Heather that she is going to have to get a job, and you can see the penny drop - rather slowly. A picture of her life begins to emerge from stray remarks. She lives comfortably at home, likes her parents, pays no rent, draws £47.90 a week dole. She has a fiancé, temporarily off sick, with whom she spends much of the day, so she is not bored. She loves looking after her sister's children.

Heather is a family girl, unadventurous, unambitious, a bit of a baby. She is not your archetypal scrounger, but work is probably low on her list of priorities. She has just subsided into an unemployed way of life and needs a small nudge no one has given her until now.

There is now a good bunch of carrots on offer to persuade all the long-term unemployed to take jobs: they get a £200 grant on their first day at work. They can work part-time, still draw benefit and save a £1,000 lump sum for the day they start full-time work. Any boss taking on a long-term unemployed worker gets a £1,500 grant plus a year's relief from national insurance contributions.

Those are the carrots Ms Clark offers Heather. The stick of compulsory work kicks in only if all the above fail. Personal and likeable, Heather will probably be snapped up by an employer. But she may decide not to work, stop claiming benefit, marry her fiancé and become a housewife. Either way, she soon won't be on the dole any more.

How well will all this work? Until the research tells us, no one knows. If the Government rushes in to proclaim workfare for all, it could be a very expensive mistake. Research may well show that the first 13 weeks of job-searching is what gets people back into work. The threat of compulsory work after that may make very little difference.

When I visited some of those doing compulsory manual jobs in Medway work, they were remarkably laid back about it. It was, they said, a bit of a joke, nothing like real work, doing a bit of wood-clearing for the scouts for 21 hours a week. They quite enjoyed it, but doubted it would qualify them for anything. As they had already failed to find work through the intensive job-search weeks, this charity make-work was going to add nothing to their chaos - or their intent.

## We have ways of making you work

When Shirley Ann met Garry the sparks flew. Shirley Ann's eyes flashed: she drew herself up magnificently in her chair and prepared for all-out war. Garry, bristling with testosterone, had met his match. No one at the Job Centre had ever bothered to challenge him before and he could hardly believe his ears. Garry, unskilled painter, 30-year-old father of two, has been drawing the dole for five-and-a-half years. Shirley Ann Clark, a Job Centre adviser, is part of a new drive to force people like him to take available jobs in these better economic times.

Today, the new job seeker's allowance comes into force, designed to chivy and harry the unemployed into work. It has a fair wind of public opinion behind it: most people have

their anecdotes about skivers, scroungers and cheats. Whoever is in government, it is the mood of the moment to want more guarantees that everyone on the dole genuinely cannot find work. So today the screws are tightened. Every dole claimant will sign a job seeker's agreement obliging them to show proof that they are looking for work. They will be interviewed every fortnight: there will be no more signing on by post, with a perfunctory interview once a quarter.

I sat in for the morning with Ms Clark, an adviser at the Job Centre in Strood, a part of the Medway suburban sprawl with above-average unemployment. Garry is precisely who the Government has in its sights. He claims that no one has forced him to do serious job-searching in the past and he is indignant at what is happening to him now. The very basis on which he

is allowed to draw the dole seems to have eluded him.

"I'm not taking some effing job. Exhausted and tyre-fitting? 'Na, wouldn't do that.' Warehouseman? 'Na'."

The row turns ideological. Garry sees no reason why he should do a job he doesn't like, eh? She snaps back. "There are lots of people who have to do jobs they don't much like, but you brought two children into the world to support!"

He boasts defiantly that he does look for work: he goes touring round building sites up in London. His father and brother are in the building trade, and he is good at mending cars, too. He is so outraged by Ms Clark that he has all but given the game away. He is almost certainly cheating the system, working and drawing the dole at the same time.

She says she will report his case to the adjudicator for refusing jobs she has suggested. "I don't care what you effing do," he says, crossing his arms. She fills in the forms, warning that he will lose benefit. However, he knows and she knows that the most he can lose is his personal allowance, some £19 a week, and he doesn't care. She will undoubtedly send the

any, which leaves her dumbfounded, so she suggests some jobs. Exhausted and tyre-fitting? "Na, wouldn't do that." Warehouseman? "Na'."

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investigators after him to try to catch him working, but unless they do, he can draw benefit until his children grow up.

The question now is whether the Government, desperate for manifesto ideas this week, will take today's new job seeker's allowance a stage further and proclaim a US-style workfare system, to force the unemployed to work for their dole. Here in Medway, Garry and Ms Clark are in a pilot scheme, Project Work, designed to try out workfare. Everyone in the area who has been unemployed for two years must join the scheme. It forces them into 13 weeks of intensive job-searching, with hour-long interviews once a fortnight, and phone calls to their home and to employers to see how interviews went. There will be no escaping Ms Clark's beady eye this time.

If all that fails, then for 13 weeks they will be obliged to work for their dole, for an extra £10 a week. The work is provided by charities, to ensure that what is called locally "the chain gang" does not take jobs that would otherwise be done by the regular workforce. It is mainly renovating heritage sites, clearing scout camps, and serving in charity shops or charity offices. So far, no white-collar worker has been forced to do blue-collar work, but as the scheme progresses that may happen if there are too few charity office jobs. Some charities have refused to take part.

This pilot workfare scheme is being carefully monitored. How many long-term unemployed get jobs? How many stay in those jobs, and for how long? How many stop claiming benefit, once they are subjected to rigorous scrutiny and threatened with work (suggesting they were cheating the system in the first place)? Does forcing them to work simply satisfy our puritanical urge to see them with a spade in their hands, or does it make them more employable? Is the work they do worthwhile to anyone? Above all, what does it cost? For it is the great expense of make-work schemes that has deterred the Government from doing it so far.

If the Government goes ahead this week and announces that this system will become universal, they will have one of the answers to these crucial questions. It could well cost a huge sum for relatively little return in getting people off the dole. It would probably be a popular policy, and there is nothing wrong with it in principle. Why not pay the unemployed to work, when we can all see how much needs doing in our squalid cities?

How today's job seeker's allowance or a future workfare system comes to be seen by the public will depend on how sensitively it is interpreted locally in each Job Centre. Will people be

treated more gently in no-hope Jarrow than in high-employment Winchester? Harrying the honest who have no chance of work, making them do useless jobs for ideological reasons, will make it hated. But threatening Garry with a spade would be no bad thing.

Ever since Beveridge's day the principle has been clear: the dole is only for those who cannot work, not for those who will not. Most experts agree that many of the idle or disheartened have always managed to fiddle the system. But the Employment Minister Eric Forth got a sharp reminder a week ago of the other side of the coin.

Appearing on Radio 2's Brian Hayes phone-in to talk about tightening the screw on the unemployed, he was swamped with calls from very angry middle-class and middle-aged unemployed people, desperate to work and furious at the inability of Job Centres to help them.

Ms Clark seems well attuned to the variety of clients she sees. Heather, for instance, is a very different case: at 27, out of work for two years, she lives with her parents. She is pretty, quiet, passive and neat. She looks a very good prospect, so why has she been unemployed so long? She wants office work, and would work locally or commute into London. "No one wants to know when they hear you've been out of work so long," she says, a fairly stock answer.

## WARNING



### You can't rely on income support to pay your mortgage.

If you're unable to work due to accident or illness, your home could be at risk. Very few people qualify for income support. The ones who do get nothing for the first two months and then only 50% of their interest payments for the next four months. But with Mortgage Payment Protection you can protect your mortgage for an average of only £15 a month. It's a good feeling to know your home is safe.



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To be eligible for cover you must have been in continuous employment for at least 16 hours a week for the last 6 months. Certain conditions apply.

## Listen up, reader, you're dead meat now



Miles Kingdon

Serving members of the SAS (Special Armed Services) are now to be asked to solemnly promise that they will not, after they have gone back to civvy street, write novels based on their life in the SAS, which must explain the non-stop barrage of phone calls I have had over the weekend from desperate SAS members.

"Have you heard the news, Mr Kingdon?" they bleat. "We are no longer allowed to write novels about the SAS!"

"Why should that worry you?" I rejoin. "Surely you joined the SAS merely to slide

silently down ropes from bell-cops and garrotte sentries?"

"Not at all!" they all say. "We joined the SAS to get material for our art. Some of us are novelists, others are poets and water-colourists! But we all have one thing in common - to turn base experience into the precious metal of art!"

"What has that got to do with me?"

"We want you to ghost-write our novels about the SAS, Mr Kingdon..."

At which point I put the phone down. Not that I am not sympathetic - it's just that I am busy right now on my own novel, which is set in the savage world of modern newspapers and I am afraid that if I don't get a move on with my book, *The Independent* will ask me to sign a clause swearing I will never base a novel on life in Fleet Street, and then a masterpiece of sex, violence and misprints will be lost for ever.

But judge for yourself. Here is a short extract from my Fleet Street thriller, *Blood in the Gutter*.

I opened the editor's door. "You wanted to see me?" I growled.

The editor paid no atten-

tion. He was talking on the phone to someone.

"All right, your Royal Highness. We'll publicise your views on the new extension to the British Museum if you give us the whole dirt on..."

I retreated. I closed the door gently. This was no business of mine. My business was to see the editor on my own business. My own business was to answer a message I had found on my desk. "The editor wants to see you."

Have you ever worked on a paper? Then you'll know that all editors are the same. They say they want to see you, you go and see them, and suddenly they're on the phone to some long-winded princeling. It's hard to attract their attention then, unless you do something special.

I did something special. I retreated 10 yards down the corridor, took a run at his door and then, just before I reached it, I took off in the air and hit it with the full impact of my heavy boots, straightening my knees at the same time so that the whole door splintered and gave way before my onslaught. It was a trick I had learnt in the

provinces, from old Bell-weather on the *Darlington Evening Telegraph*.

As the door fell inward on his floor and I entered the inner sanctum, rolling over and standing up, the editor looked up and put his hand over the receiver.

"No sandwiches today, thanks," he said. "I'm having lunch with Michael Fortillo. Then he recognised me."

"Ah, Kingdon," he said. "Did I send for you?"

"I wouldn't dream of entering your presence if you hadn't." He looked at me hard, trying to work out if I was showing respect or contempt. He gave up.

"The fact is, Kingdon, we've had a letter of complaint from a reader in Bath who accuses you of getting your facts completely wrong."

"Impossible," I said. "I don't deal in facts. I make everything up. That way, I can't get anything wrong."

"Nevertheless," said the editor, "this reader makes some very powerful points. I think you ought to take some action."

"You mean," I said, "pop down to Bath and rub them out? Eliminate them? Liquidate them?"

The editor sighed.

"Kingdon, I sometimes wonder if you wouldn't be more suited to counter-insurgency operations than the world of newspapers. Has nobody ever told you that every time you rub out a reader, you lose circulation?"

Before I could answer, a curious thing happened. The windows burst in under a fusillade of bullets. I threw myself to the floor and the editor fell dead. I found myself inches from the phone. I picked it up. "Hello?" said a voice. "What on earth is going on?"

"Were you speaking to the editor just now, Your Majesty?" I said.

"Well, yes, I..."

"The conversation is over," I said. "He's dead. He's been cut off in his prime. He has been removed from this life. Your deal is off."

"But that's terrible! Who on earth would want to kill the editor?"

"Believe me, baby," I said, "on a national newspaper, who wouldn't want to kill the editor?"

Want to know what happened next? It's all in my forthcoming novel, *Blood in the Gutter*!

2025/10/07



## The secret of this newspaper lies in its title

Three small incidents got me going on the path that led to the launch of *The Independent* 10 years ago today. During the 1979 general election, I saw *The Daily Telegraph*, where I was then city editor, had some wickedly funny sketches of Mrs Thatcher's campaign being done by a brilliant writer because it was thought the coverage was harming the Conservatives' chances of winning. A few years later I wanted to change the look of the same newspaper's City pages; my plans were vetoed by the printers, who asked for extra money in their pay packets to make the alterations. Management refused. Then finally, in 1985, when the admirable Eddie Shah announced his plans to launch a new mid-market newspaper, *Today*, I asked myself why newspapers should always be dominated by tycoons. Could not we journalists seize the opportunity that Mr Shah had identified and use it to launch a paper that was independent of political parties, and which had a much broader coverage than had been possible in the old Fleet Street?

Now it is commonplace to give separate pages or sections to health issues, to education and to science; now the arts get sustained coverage; now the broadsheet newspapers provide listings services; now care is taken with obituaries, oow photographs are given plenty of space and now comment, marked as such, can appear on front pages when great issues are at stake. All these were *Independent* innovations which have since been copied so that today readers of broadsheet newspapers would be surprised if these things weren't done.

What has not been borrowed, indeed cannot be, are certain attitudes. The most important aspect of this newspaper is its title. For me independence means no commitment to any cause other than our own; a refusal to place the newspaper permanently on the left or the right



Andreas Whittam-Smith

For me, independence means no commitment to any cause other than our own; a refusal to place the newspaper permanently on the left or the right

paper carries out its editorial tasks but they never interfere in the direction or extent of its coverage of particular subjects. Do the advertisers have a say? This is not a problem for national newspapers as it is for magazines; newspapers have so many individual advertisers that no single one has leverage. British Airways once removed its business from *The Independent* for some months because of our criticisms of the directors during the "dirty tricks" row with Richard Branson. But that can be endured.

Independence is the core value, but I would add two injunctions: trust the writers and respect the readers. By trusting the writers I mean that the editor should accept what the reporter finds and not have a strong view about everything. The account should speak for itself. It is wrong when newspapers are edited to convey a consistent message or to confirm a particular picture of society and the world comes down to the reporter that the editor wants a particular spin. When Mrs Thatcher was in 10 Downing Street, conservative newspapers began to see everything through Mrs Thatcher's eyes, confirming her enthusiasms and her prejudices with every story.

Writers have their own independence, though even that can be undermined. We journalists can be corrupted, not by money but by more insidious attractions. Flattery has a potent influence on us. The specialist journalist naturally gets to know the people about whom he or she is regularly writing. A professional relationship may turn into a friendship, genuine or feigned. At that point, the writer is beginning to lose the ability to cover the subject even-handedly. One of the most important tasks of editors is to watch out for the danger signs.

The second injunction, respect the readers, is more important than ever. One example is provided by those rare occasions when newspapers provide a verbatim report of a speech or interview. For once, they resist the temptation to angle the account. It is not a technique to use too often but when the Princess of Wales gave her celebrated *Panorama* interview, the best report would have been the full text. More important, the way in which all broadsheet newspapers - including *The Independent* when I had the responsibility - have felt it necessary in recent years to move downmarket and become more "popular" has had advantages but may also have this risk, that the readers begin to be treated according to the ways advertisers categorise them rather than as they really are. Such lack of respect damages the trust between readers and their newspapers. Without that, we have no future.

The author was editor of *The Independent* from 1986 to 1994.

## Cry havoc! And let slip the Tory conference

By Julian Critchley

Last week we saw a reversal of roles. The Labour conference at Blackpool was beautifully stage-managed as if choreographed by Berkeley Babsy. This week's Tory conference at Bournemouth threatens to ape Labour conferences of old: all foot, fire and brimstone.

Are we heading for the collapse of A Stout Party? The Tories have been engaged in yet another round of in-fighting over Europe and the Government's policy towards a common currency. In *The Times* last Saturday, John Major said once again that he would keep his options open, and refused to rule out a common currency in the lifetime of the next Parliament.

And if quarrels over Europe were not enough, the Hamilton/Al Fayed/Greer "scandal" broke once more to the glee of Labour and the relish of the popular press. The Prime Minister has hurried to limit the damage, but the matter could not have come at a more embarrassing time.

There are occasions when Mr Major must be close to despair. But to what extent are the party's problems a result of a lack of leadership on his part? The question is one that has, so far, been posed only in private.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor, the boxing baronet, is permitted to get away with open criticism of Ken Clarke, a junior minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth office, he went to *The World at One* to attack his more senior colleague. I caught a glimpse of him later on telly, manfully striding towards the BBC studios followed by the usual pack of Euro-sceptics. I picked out from among them Sir Michael Spicer and Bill Cash. Bonsor's last stand was clearly a calculated one, but he was forced into a humiliating withdrawal later that day. Should he not have been sacked? I have sat under seven prime ministers; I fear only Major would have let him get away with it.

David Heathcote-Amory was permitted earlier this year to write and publish a pamphlet attacking government policy while he was Pymaster General. Presumably, he wrote it in the Government's time, and then, at his own convenience, resigned and published it, scoring hits with both barrels. He should have got the push as soon as the Prime Minister knew he was putting pen to paper.

If the Conservative Party is



Major is facing the most difficult party conference since 1963... the sly and saturnine Redwood must be routed before it is too late

to avoid a defeat next April on the scale of 1945 or 1966, everything will depend on Mr Major, and, to a great extent, upon his performance at Bournemouth next Friday afternoon. He is facing this week the most difficult party conference since Harold Wilson divested himself of his title in 1963, and one at which he must make the speech of his life. All Tory conferences are stage-managed; rallies at which the "faithful" run should

ers with the great ones of the party, and are then sent home raring to go.

This year, it is going to be far harder to stage-manage the conference in the traditional manner. There will be no more balloons, no more Dame Vera Lynn singing the *White Cliffs of Dover*. Lady Thatcher might make mischief, John Redwood, Cash and Michael Spicer will do their best to steal the headlines, using a poll of Tory can-

he will make yet another. Peter Lilley will either sing a silly song or recite a sillier poem, and then attack the poor. He, too, is not on Major's side. Neither is the oleaginous Michael Howard. All three are numbered among Major's "bastards".

It will all be left to the Prime Minister on the Friday afternoon to give the party back its confidence, and to enthrone the party activist to go out and work for the return of his Government. Unlike Heseltine, Major is no orator, although he can rely upon a great deal of personal affection. Did he not do the trick in '92? But if we are to have any chance whatever, he must stamp his authority upon the Conservative Party as never before. The sly and saturnine Redwood, whose ambition threatens to bring us down, must be routed before it is too late. And, nice woman though she is, it will not be enough to cast Norma Major as "the Tories' secret weapon".

In 1990, I voted for Michael Heseltine as leader. I do not regret having done so. Last year, I voted for Mr Major against the opportunist John Redwood. In my 30 years as an MP I have witnessed a social and cultural change come over the Tory party - a change for the worse. Even Steve Norris, for God's sake, describes the Tories in his about-to-be-published autobiography, as being divided between "oobs and nerds". There are precious few nobles.

There is nothing dishonourable when it comes to Europe in keeping one's options open. The history of the Tory party with regard to Europe is a dismal tale of missing every bus but the last, and then complaining loudly that we were not in Europe at the formative stage.

Were Mr Major to allow his options to be closed, and thus to surrender to the demands of populism and narrow nationalism, he would miss this bus and lose the election. The Tories, in power for 17 years, would be out for 20. In opposition, Redwood (or Portillo) would play Bomar Lay to Ken Clarke's Balfour. The party would split, leading to a realignment of British politics. The importance of Mr Major's speech on Friday afternoon cannot be exaggerated.

The author is the Conservative MP for Alton. Owing to ill health he is not standing at the election.

## The Alf Garnett version of history

We are still being fed a distorted picture of Germany and Lady Thatcher is to blame, says Tony Barber

Politicians and diplomats always know it. But only now is the British public learning just how much damage Margaret Thatcher inflicted on Britain's relations with Germany during her final years in office.

The legacy is plain for all to see. Last summer, during the Euro 96 football championship, it took the form of a childish, but vicious tabloid campaign comparing England's game against Germany with Britain's war effort against the Nazis more than 50 years ago.

In today's Tory party, it takes the form of ignorant right-wingers yelling that Germany's support for European economic and monetary union is actually a device to impose German domination on Europe. Far more than in the pre-Thatcher years, a significant body of opinion-formers, in politics and the "respectable" press, shows no shame about associating Germany with extremism, expansionism, bullying and, worst of all, a Fourth Reich.

Meanwhile, the real Germany continues down the non-extremist, non-expansionist path that it has trodden since the formation of the Federal Republic in 1949. As any Briton who lives or has lived in the real Germany will tell you, it is a Germany that bears less and less resemblance to the wild fantasies of certain politicians and commentators in Britain.

Margaret Thatcher bears a heavy responsibility for the distorted impressions of Germany that are fed to the British people. Two new books paint a devastating picture of a German minister whose views on Germany were little short of scandalous.

One, called *Diplomacy and Distortion at the Court of Margaret Thatcher*, is by the scholar George Urban, whom she consulted on foreign policy matters throughout the Eighties. At a meeting in London in December 1989, as West and East Germany were moving swiftly towards unification, she voiced her profound opposition to the whole process.

"You know, George," the author quotes her as saying, "there are things that people of your generation and mine ought never to forget. We've known through the war and we know perfectly well what the Germans are like, and what dictators can do, and how national character doesn't basically change."

Urban notes, "I was amazed to hear her uttering views about people and countries, especially Germany, which were not at all different from the Alf Garnett version of history." Urban was one of six British and American experts whom Mrs Thatcher summoned to Chequers in March 1990 to discuss Germany and the implications of unification. The six were unanimous in the view that Germany had proved a model liberal democracy since the war and there was little prospect of renewed dictatorship.

If only the British public had had the opportunity to hear this eminently sensible assessment of modern Germany. Instead, a memorandum summing up the Chequers talks was drawn up by Mrs Thatcher's foreign policy adviser, Charles Powell, who put a disgraceful anti-German slant on the experts' views.

Thus when the memoran-



dum was leaked and published in the *Independent* on Sunday, it appeared that the experts believed that Germany threw its weight around in Europe

and that German national characteristics included "angst, aggressiveness, assertiveness, bullying, egotism, inferiority complex, sentimentality".

British public opinion was misled about Germany because a senior Downing Street adviser had prepared a memorandum to suit Mrs Thatcher's anti-German views.

The second book, *I Wanted German Unity* by Helmut Kohl, reveals that the Chancellor "had terrible rows" with Mrs Thatcher "on more than one occasion". She even branded him a coward at a Nato meeting when he expressed opposition to the deployment of short-range nuclear weapons on German soil.

Mr Kohl replied: "When I look around, I am the only one here who is the father of two reserve officers. I don't need a lecture from anyone."

The inevitable consequence of Mrs Thatcher's hostility to Germany was that Britain's opinion counted for less and less in Bonn. However, it is interesting that even though President François Mitterrand of France was at first just as sceptical as Mrs Thatcher about German unification, Mr Kohl refuses to criticise him in his book.

Instead, he conveniently blames the French press for trying to whip up anti-unification feeling. Mr Kohl forgave Mitterrand, but not Mrs Thatcher, because in contrast to the French leader she was unrepentantly anti-German and anti-European.

After Mrs Thatcher was swept from office, John Major and Chris Patten, then Tory party chairman, made a genuine effort to reconstruct British-German relations on an amicable basis. Major went to Bonn and declared that Britain should be "at the heart of Europe", and Patten sought to cast the Tories

in a Christian Democratic image like that of Mr Kohl's own party.

It was an effort to which Germany gave a warm response, even if there were doubts in Bonn about how far the Tories were capable of going in a pro-European direction. In retrospect, that brief period of positive diplomacy looks like a golden age in comparison with the snarling and whingeing that has passed these days for the British Government's policy towards Germany.

To appreciate what really concerns Mr Kohl and his fellow Germans, one only has to read his speech last week on the sixth anniversary of unification. "As a leading export nation, we Germans must do everything to make our country fit for the challenges of the future. That is the only way to create the basis for new and secure jobs... The most important thing is our firm will to fashion the future together - a future in peace and freedom for Germany and Europe."

One can almost hear the Mandy Rice-Davies-like response of the loony Tory right: "Well, he would say that, wouldn't he?" The real questions for Britain, though, are different.

How much damage is anti-German propaganda causing to our relations with Germany and our position in Europe? How bad must British-German relations become before we realise the calamity we have inflicted on ourselves? Above all, how long before sensible people in Britain rally together to extract the anti-German poison from the public's ear by Mrs Thatcher and her acolytes?

## Good-bye battery



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**Ronald John Bilsland Colville**, businessman and banker: born Glasgow 21 May 1917; MBE 1944; succeeded 1945 as second Baron Clydesmuir, Lord-Lieutenant of Lanarkshire 1963-92; CB 1965; chairman, executive committee, Scottish Council (Development and Industry) 1966-78, president 1978-86; Governor, British Legion Bank 1966-71; Deputy Governor, Bank of Scotland 1971-72; Governor 1972-81; Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1971-72; KT 1972; a Queen, Royal Company of Archers, Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland 1985-88; Captain General 1988-96; married 1946 Joan Booth (two sons, two daughters); died Bigger, Lanarkshire 2 October 1996.

Pullen became Clerk to the Trustees of the United Westminster Almshouses Group of Charities, which post he held at the time of his death. He maintained his links with the abbey as Deputy High Bailiff.

**James L. Bowen**

*William Reginald James Pullen, church administrator: born Fulmouth, Cornwall 17 February 1922; Receiver-General, Westminster Abbey 1959-87; Chapter Clerk 1963-87, Registrar 1964-84; MVO 1966, CVO 1975, KCVO 1987; married 1945 Angela Hebron (two daughters); died 25 September 1986.*

of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 1969-84; chairman of the EEC Monetary Committee 1958-69. Advocate of a balanced development of member states: "Not only quantity counts in economic growth, but also the quality is of great importance," he said.

President 15 July 1996.

An application to set aside a decree nisi, on the grounds that the divorce procedure was wholly irregular and achieved by fraud and that therefore the decree should be considered null and void, was a judicial proceeding for dissolution of marriage within the meaning of s 1(1)(b) of the Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act 1926. The section was mandatory and did not give the court a discretion. Since it did not contain a criminal sanction it was to be construed restrictively. Although its effect was therefore to restrict the reporting of the case, there was ample scope in the context of s 1(1)(b)(iv) for clear and full details of the proceedings to be given, but not for a line-by-line account of what a particular witness said at any particular time.

*John Laffoon (Attorney Solicitor for the American Generali, A.G. Suer) (Donne Mitchell, A.G. Suer) for the second intervenor; Lord Hutton QC for the behalf of the Queen v. Attorney Solicitor for the American Generali, A.G. Suer*

ported. Although s 10 of the Animal Health Act 1981 together with secondary legislation gave the Ministry total control over animal imports, the animals were invariably sent to post-import isolation at premises arranged by the importer which, though approved by, were not owned by the Ministry, which did not therefore have total control over the animals so as to be liable to the purchasers.

*Stephen Waine (Harwood & James, Aylesbury) for the plaintiff; Peter Roth (Solicitors, MAFF) for the defendant.*

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Princess Margaret, President, Inverlathen Children's Aid Natn. conf., opens the Inverlathen Speech and Language Nursery at Aberdeen County Infant School, Mays Road, North Letham, North Scotland. Princess Michael of Kent attends the Women of the Year Luncheon at the Savoy Hotel.

## Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment carries out the Changing of the Guard at Horse Guards, Whitehall, London. The Royal Regiment of Wales maintains the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace. 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh

**Changing of the Guard**  
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment escorts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1 Jan. 1953. Jullien/The Royal Regiment of Wales mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11 Jan. 2001, band provided by the Welsh



# Hot money thrown at speculative shares as bull market roars on

As the FTSE 100 index breaks through the 4,000 level and enters uncharted territory, anybody who needs reminding that shares are at or near the top of a roaring bull market should take a look at the latest dealing figures from ShareLink, the execution-only stockbroker.

Its weekly list of the most popular trades by clients is a pretty accurate guide to the attitudes and behaviour of private investors.

From the evidence available, it seems a lot of them are using "hot money" made on profits from blue chips and throwing it at some of the most speculative shares in the known universe in the fond hope of making a quick turn and a fast buck.

Sadly, many of them will get their fingers badly burnt, if they have not already done so.

Take ShareLink's top 10 purchases in the week to 2 October.

Rubbing shoulders in the league table with the likes of British Telecom, Hanson and Railtrack are Pan Andean Resources (10th), Brent Walker (5th) and Memory Corporation (3rd).

Brent Walker, owner of the William Hill bookmaking chain, is the ultimate penny stock, worth little more than the value of its stock market quotation. It has assets of less than £600m and liabilities running to more than £1.4bn.

True, its shares shot up 40 per cent to 3.5p last week on news that Brent Walker would receive £36m from Grand Met after overpaying for William Hill in 1989.

But with spreads - the difference between bid and offer prices - as wide as a penny, not even the most nimble of traders could get out of Brent Walker at a profit.

Pan Andean Resources is another cautionary tale. Up to 3,000 small shareholders were

sucked into the AIM-listed stock in true South Sea Bubble fashion on bullish press reports about oil drilling prospects in Bolivia.

But the shares, as high as 135p a month ago, crashed by more than 100p last week after it was drilled was dry. The circumstances surrounding dealings in the shares before the announcement are now the subject of a Stock Exchange inquiry.

Rising computer chip prices are apparently stirring renewed interest in loss-making semiconductor group Memory Corporation, another AIM-listed stock.

Memory, readers may recall, is the stock once reputedly brokered to go up to £10 by 1998; another reckoned Memory would make profits of £20m by then.

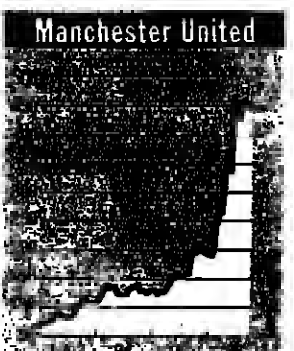
Instead the shares, over £5 last year, languish at 55p and losses in the first six months



## STOCK MARKET WEEK PATRICK TOOHER

widened to £3.1m. You have been warned.

This week sees a steady trickle of company results, though the main focus of at-



tention will be on any market-moving news to come out of the Conservative Party conference in Bournemouth.

Lucas, the aerospace and auto components group merging with Vario of the US, will report for the last time as a single entity on Tuesday. The fact that Victor Rice, the new chief executive of Lucas Vario, will not be attending the results presentation speaks volumes about their relative unimportance for investors. For example, news about restructuring at Lucas and more detail about the benefits of merging with Vario are likely to be thin on the ground.

Nevertheless, analysts will be looking for clues about the state

of the European automotive market, especially in France, which is giving them cause for concern. Broker NatWest believes the results will also provide evidence of an upturn in the fortunes of Aerospace, a persistent underperformer whose revival is essential if disposals in this division are to be achieved further out. For the record, NatWest expects operating profits for the year to July of £225m versus £173m a year ago.

On the same day, Manchester United announces its preliminary results. Still without a finance director following the departure of Robin Lauder to Leeds, United is expected to unveil a drop in pre-tax profits to about £13m from £20m.

The main reason for the shortfall is that building work on a new stand at the club's Old Trafford stadium continued during most of last season, reducing crowd capacity and cut-

ting gate receipts. But the shares, like the Double-winning team on the pitch, have been stellar performers this year, rising from below 200p to peak at 489p in June, days after Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB paid £670m for the right to broadcast live Premier League football until 2001.

It later emerged that Manchester United had also received a 480p-a-share bid in May worth about £300m from VCI, the video group chaired by the Channel Four boss, Michael Grade.

The talks eventually fizzled out after United's share price went above the amount VCI was prepared to pay.

Still in clothes retailing, Austin Reed should also report a strong set of interims on Wednesday, helped by a recovery in womenswear and an improvement in manufacturing. Pre-tax profits should come in at about £1.9m, compared with £1.4m last time.

tax profit for the six months to July of about £4.5m compared with £3.2m last year. Analysts reckon the first-half performance was well flagged at the company's annual general meeting at the end of May, when the chairman, Neil Benson, told shareholders that sales across the group were up 12 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

They added that the benefits from the shops Moss Bros opened towards the last year-end have come through in the current year. Upbeat comments are also expected on the outlook for the menswear market, which is very buoyant at the moment.

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### Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The year is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Bk rights: Ex-dividend: Ex all: Unlisted Securities Market: A suspended: Jp: Parity Paid: Nt: Paid: Shares: 2: A: M: Stock: Source: FT Information

### The Independent Index

The index shows you at a glance real-time share prices by phone from Seag. Simply dial 0800 123 333, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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# OFT steps up check on grocery giants

NIGEL COPE

The Office of Fair Trading, the competition watchdog, is once again reviewing the increasing dominance of the country's big supermarket groups in the wake of fresh complaints from smaller food retailers.

The dramatic action follows last week's figures from market research group AGB which showed that the big four supermarket chains - Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway and Asda - increased their share of the packaged goods market by a full percentage point between August and September. They now control almost two-thirds of the market between them.

The OFT, which keeps the power of the big supermarkets under constant review, decided to widen the scope of its inquiry following a formal complaint from the National Association of Master Bakers. The association had complained that the supermarket groups have cut the price of a loaf of bread to just 19p in some

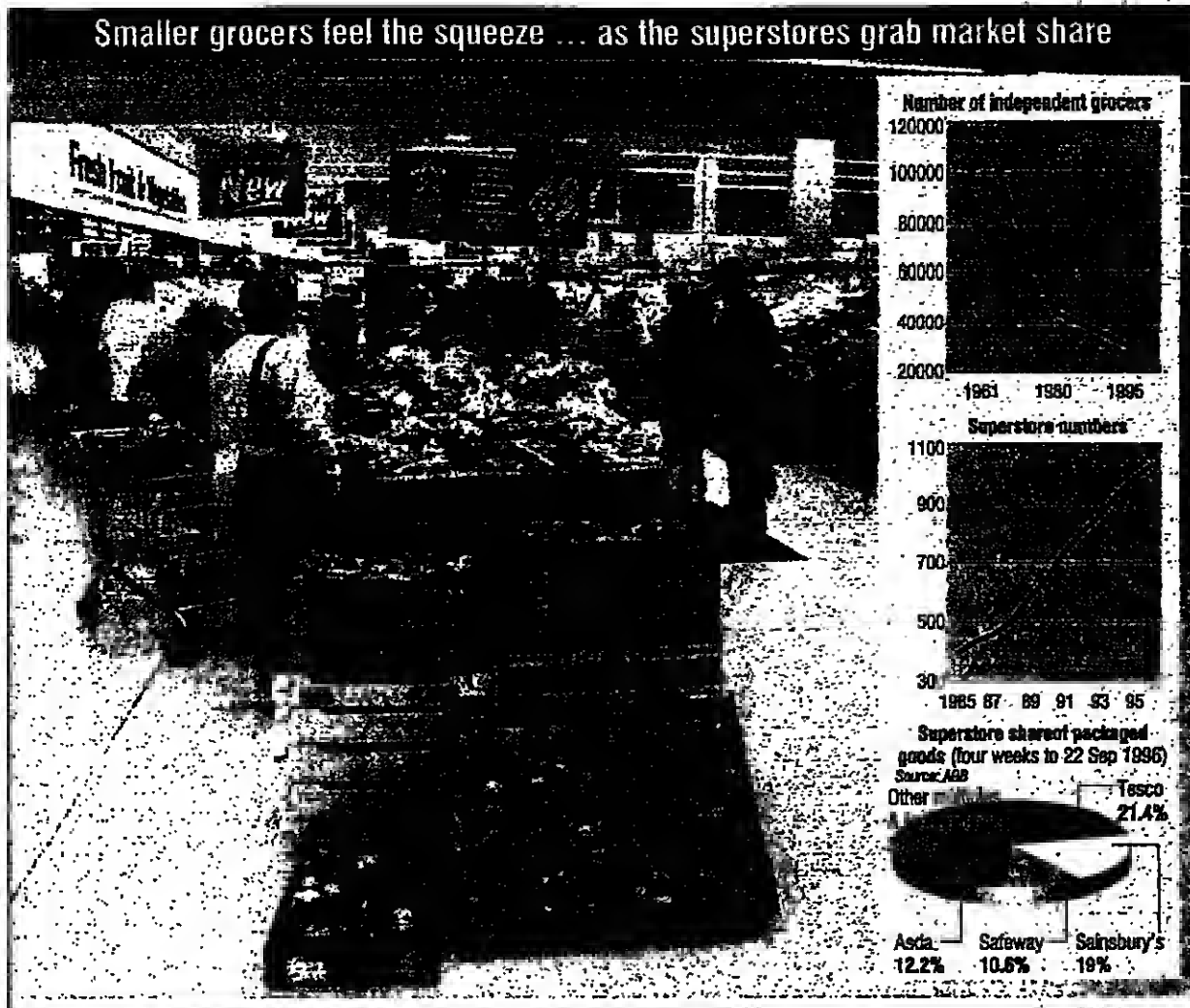
cases, lower than the loaves cost to produce.

Although the OFT has not yet launched an official investigation, the files on the issue of supermarket dominance have been reopened.

John Bridgeman, the director-general of fair trading, said: "Clearly the major supermarkets are increasingly significant players in the food and drink sector: they are able to negotiate favourable terms and conditions from many manufacturers and they are able to price their lines aggressively and selectively in the quest for bigger sales."

"While the majority of consumers would appear to have benefited from the growth of the supermarkets - after all, they are under no obligation to patronise them - some manufacturers or some retailers may be disadvantaged."

Mr Bridgeman said it was not his intention to protect companies from the rigours of competition. "But it seems that when powerful buyers emerge



in the supply chain, the competition between them, which I would wish to encourage, may have distorting effects elsewhere in the system which are less appealing."

Mr Bridgeman wrote to the Association of Master Bakers last month, saying: "My officials have been considering the difficult issues raised by the impact of the large supermarket chains on small competing chains such as your members." He said this was "a complex area which is being given careful consideration."

According to the retail consultants Verdict Research, the supermarkets have succeeded in grabbing market share from a range of specialist retailers. Between 1987 and 1994 hutchers' sales fell by 32 per cent, greengrocers' by 32 per cent, off-licences by 10 per cent and bakers' by 5 per cent.

The supermarkets have been the subject of a string of investigations by the competition authorities. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission examined the ability of the major retailers to be supplied at favourable discounts but concluded that UK law gave adequate protection to smaller competitors.

If the OFT elects to mount a full-scale investigation, it would be the third time the watchdog has examined the issue of supermarket dominance. It investigated the industry in 1985 and again in 1992-94 but found the market to be working competitively to the benefit of consumers.

# Boom on the high street 'will last until 1998'

Britain is set to enjoy a retail boom that will last until at least 1998, a new report predicts. Retail sales growth will peter out after that, though a wholesale downturn is unlikely, writes Nigel Cope.

The predictions are made in "Retailing 2000", published today by the retail consultancy Verdict Research. It forecasts that the current upturn in high street sales will continue, with UK retail sales growing by 6 per cent in 1997 and 1998, followed by a gradual slowdown.

The sector's improving fortunes will be supported by rising house prices and the consequent fall in negative equity, together with continued low inflation.

"We are optimistic about retail prospects," said Verdict's Richard Hyman. "This is a real upturn that will last for some time. But it is not the beginning of a 1980s-style consumer boom which will end in tears. The sector will remain highly competitive."

Verdict says that between now and the end of the decade total retail capacity will increase by more than 22 million square feet as large shopping centres such as Bluewater Park in Dartford, Kent, Cribbs Causeway near Bristol and Trafford Park in Manchester, start trading.

Mr Hyman suggests that the polarisation on the high street will continue, with the best retailers prospering while the rest struggle. "The good retailers are going to do very well but more moderate companies such as Sainsbury, House of Fraser and WH Smith will not be able to rely solely on an improvement in the market. They have to solve their structural problems."

Branding will become increasingly important, with companies such as Next and Marks & Spencer the leaders in the clothing field. The report is also optimistic about the prospects for department stores. They will benefit from demographic changes such as the growing proportion of older people, the report says.

Electrical and grocery retailers will be the best performers over the next five years, with sales boosted by the surge in demand for PCs and other computer-based technology.

Mail order will remain under pressure with the decline of the traditional agency side of the business continuing.

Verdict is also bullish about the prospects for the high street. Though still under pressure from the large out-of-town shopping centres and retail parks, high streets are increasingly becoming popular destinations for comparison shopping, particularly for clothes. The report says local authorities need to invest more in their high streets, providing better services and facilities to enable them to compete with the out-of-town centres.

# Small business at mercy of banks

Britain's small businesses are still in the stranglehold of banks, leaving the country's entrepreneurs vulnerable to high interest rates and onerous finance charges, according to a survey published today, writes Matthew Horsman.

The Federation of Small Businesses and accountants Pannell Kerr Forster warn that small businesses are not generating enough profits to become self-financing, and more than half rely on overdrafts and other non-fixed forms of financing. These are repayable on demand, which leaves many of the country's smaller companies dependent on their banks, the survey, "Funding the Growth of Britain's Small Businesses", concludes.

"Only as alternative methods of self-financing and profit retention are developed will small business move from this vulnerable position," said Tony Miller, chairman of the FSB's financial affairs division.

Alarmingly, even those businesses with longer-term, fixed finance arrangements report a wide range of interest rates, and 44 per cent claim to be paying the same or more in interest compared to last year, despite the reduction in bank rates.

According to the survey, based on returns from 2,000 companies, 30 per cent of businesses pay more than 3.25 per cent overbase rate, with 11 per cent paying as much as 12 per cent over base rate.

"It is disturbing that so many small businesses do not appear to be benefiting from lower interest rates," said Steven Bruck, partner at Pannell Kerr Forster.

More encouragingly, the vast majority of small businesses have become aware that factoring and invoice discounting are legitimate financial tools.



Coming home: The payment clears the way for Octav Botnar to return from Switzerland

# Botnar pays up £50m to settle tax dispute

MATTHEW HORSMAN

Octav Botnar, the former Nissan car magnate, paid £50m to the Inland Revenue over the weekend in "full and final payment" of a hotly disputed £250m corporation tax bill arising from his lucrative trade in imported Nissan vehicles.

The deal, which caps five years of acrimonious disagreement between Mr Botnar and the Revenue, clears the way for the tycoon's return to Britain from Switzerland, where he has been living since the dispute flared in 1991.

A formal statement will be made today by the Inland Revenue. Mr Botnar is expected to make a hard-hitting statement in court, decrying the attitude of the tax authorities and accusing them of "blackmail" in forcing the partial payment. He is believed to have decided to capitulate once it became clear that the Revenue had no intention of ending its campaign to force a settlement. Mr Botnar, who is 83, wanted to return to Britain and enjoy the time remaining to him, a source said last night.

"This was never about the money," the source said. "It was a matter of principle to him." He made the deal, it is said, because he "just wanted to get on with his life."

The tax bill arose out of Mr Botnar's Nissan import business, which he began in the early 1970s at a time when very few Britons appeared to like the Japanese cars. He amassed a fortune estimated at up to £2bn,

thanks to an exclusive agreement with the Japanese car company that lasted until 1991.

The Inland Revenue launched an investigation that year into Mr Botnar's working-based business, which ultimately led to the imprisonment of two Nissan UK executives. The Revenue argued that Mr Botnar owed £250m in corporation tax and a further £50m in personal income tax, although the latter demand was subsequently dropped. Mr Botnar and his wife had been on holiday in Switzerland, and elected not to return.

The Inland Revenue had vowed to continue the fight for as long as it took to settle, and Mr Botnar would have been effectively barred from ever returning to Britain.

# Reed and Blenheim close to agreement on £450m bid

MATTHEW HORSMAN

A £450m bid from Reed Elsevier for Blenheim, the exhibitions company, could be agreed as early as this week, sources close to the Anglo-Dutch publishing giant said over the weekend.

"Things are definitely moving, although we have taken the weekend off to recharge our batteries," a senior source disclosed. Reed is thought to be offering about 480p a share for the exhibitions company, which last week unveiled sharply higher interim pre-tax profits. The shares closed on Friday at 413.5p, well short of their high of 468p, reached at the height of takeover speculation.

But a source close to Blenheim cautioned yesterday

that Reed was not the only bidder still in the frame, although she declined to name other parties. It is believed that United News & Media, Lord Hollick's newspaper and television company, could still be interested, despite having suspended talks late in the summer, following disagreements over the amount of confidential information Blenheim was willing to provide to the would-be suitor.

Talks between Blenheim's advisers and Reed were scheduled to resume this morning. According to the Blenheim camp, there might be "other parties in other rooms" discussing a possible bid.

Analysts stressed over the weekend that UNM was unlikely to stand by and let Reed take the prize. Blenheim, which

has had a rocky few years since the recession, is poised to benefit from an upturn in the exhibitions business, and is looking ahead to a very strong schedule next year.

"This is a good time for buyers to be looking at Blenheim," said one analyst.

The company would be a good fit for either UNM or Reed. Analysts discounted suggestions that other buyers - either from the Continent or the US - might be in the wings.

The on-again, off-again bid saga has frustrated management on all sides and annoyed shareholders, who have seen their shares fluctuate widely in value as bid talks heated up and then cooled off in rapid succession.

Reed insiders accused Blenheim management of being "difficult to deal with" and

suggested a deal could be done quickly with more co-operation.

Most recently, Reed has been putting pressure on Neville Buch, the chairman, and other directors who between them control 25 per cent of the shares. Another large block is controlled by the French utility company Generale des Eaux. Reed had hoped to do a deal last week, to coincide with the release of Blenheim's interim results, but there are still disagreements over the precise form of the offer and the price.

Since Blenheim became an open bid target three months ago, its management has been holding out for a price well above 500p a share. United News & Media, which held talks for several weeks in the summer, wanted to go no higher than 450p.

# Currencies to trade on Internet

JILL TREANOR

Banking Correspondent

Internet-savvy investors will, from today, be able to buy and sell foreign currencies on the information superhighway, thanks to an innovative service launched by Currency Management Corporation, the London-based dealer.

CMC offers the Internet service and the necessary software at no charge. It will make its money on the spread between its own buying and selling of foreign currencies.

The service, which will initially operate under an interim permit from the Securities and Futures Authority, builds on a project started by CMC earlier this year, when the firm started quoting prices for foreign currencies on the Internet. But, to buy or sell at the quoted prices, investors still needed to pick up the tele-

phone and speak to CMC's offices in London.

From today, human contact can be avoided. All investors need do is log on to the site at <http://www.forex-cmc.co.uk> and click on one of the prices being quoted on the CMC Internet page. A dealing ticket pops up which allows the investor to place his order. The investor must fill in the amount of currency and whether it is a deal to buy or sell.

After clicking on the "confirm" pad, the transaction lands on a screen at CMC and, within five seconds confirmation of the deal arrives on the investor's screen.

The dealing service will be open around the clock, and will offer prices in 27 currencies. Peter Cruddas, CMC's managing director, hopes to have 6,000 clients within a year.

CMC, which has been operating in London since 1989,

has applied for full authorisation from the SFA for the service, but for now, transactions will not be covered by the Investors Compensation Scheme.

Mr Cruddas said the company would deal only with "professionals" - for instance, high-net-worth individuals or small banks and company treasurers.

Before being able to deal, clients will need to open an account with CMC and make an initial deposit. No money will be transferred over the Internet and the deposits will be held in a segregated account. CMC said it had dealt with the issue of security on the Internet by installing the same software used by many banks. The

deals will be coded so that only CMC has access to them once they have been executed.

Mr Cruddas rejected suggestions the service could constitute a head-on competitive threat to banks, which make vast sums of money from brokering foreign exchange deals. He insisted that CMC wanted to work in co-operation with potential competitors.

"We're inviting anybody who wants to distribute [their prices] through the Internet," he said.

Eventually, CMC intends to offer futures and options dealing, as well as market analysis. "The day will come when clients will not need to call us on the phone," he said.

**STOCK MARKETS**

FTSE 100

Index	Close	Week's chg	Change%	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD%
FTSE 100	4024.80	+78.4	+2.0	4024.80	3832.30	3.89
FTSE 250	4437.90	+31.7	+0.7	4588.80	4015.30	3.44
FTSE 350	2002.10	+33.7	+1.7	2002.10	1816.60	3.79
FT Small Cap	2178.58	+8.5	+0.4	2244.36	1854.06	3.12
FT All Share	1975.27	+31.3	+1.6	1975.27	1791.95	3.74
New York	5992.86	+119.9	+2.0	5992.86	5032.94	2.17
Tokyo	21148.03	-399.0	-1.9	22666.80	19734.70	0.751
Hong Kong	11905.61	+146.1	+1.2	12014.56	10204.87	3.451
Frankfurt	2683.28	+24.2	+0.9	2683.28	2253.36	1.731

Source: FT Information

**INTEREST RATES**

UK interest rates

US interest rates

Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Term	YTD%
UK	5.81	6.18	7.38	8.06	7.53	8.17
US	5.31	5.69	6.42	6.07	6.74	6.42
Japan	0.38	0.50	2.76	2.73	-	-
Germany	3.06	3.13	3.06	6.59	6.79	-

Bond Yields

Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Term	YTD%
UK	5.81	6.18	7.38	8.06	7.53	8.17
US	5.31	5.69	6.42	6.07	6.74	6.42
Japan	0.38	0.50	2.76	2.73	-	-
Germany	3.06	3.13	3.06	6.59	6.79	-

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises - Top 5	Falls - Top 5
Bols-Royce 266 30.5 13.0	Imperial Tobacco 418 n/a n/a
Herbert-Smith 141 15.5 12.4	Scania Trucks 545 38 6.7
Bk of Scotland 276 29.5 12.0	British Gas 187.5 13 6.5

**CURRENCIES**

\$/£

\$/DM

Index	Close	Week's chg	YTD%
\$ (London)	1.5631	-0.086	-1.5835
\$ in York	1.5653	+0.023	-1.5808
DM (London)	2.3908	+0.749	-2.2559
DM (London)	174.374	+1.098	199.271
£ Index	87.1	+0.2	86.1

Other Indicators

Index	Close	Week's chg	YTD%
Oil Brent	23.58	+0.13	15.70
Gold	282.30	+0.80	283.10
Gold C	243.30	+0.85	242.35
Russ Index	153.1	+2.1	148.8
10 Oct	106.1	+2.27	105.7
25 Oct	106.1	+2.27	105.7

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## science

## technoquest

**Q) Do fish sweat? If not, how do they keep cool?**  
**A)** Fish do not sweat, unlike mammals, which live surrounded by air and cool themselves by evaporating moisture that they've sweated from their skin. Fish have no such means of maintaining a constant body temperature and their blood is usually at the same temperature as their surroundings. Although the



temperature range tolerance of some fish (such as rock pool dwellers) is remarkable, most fish will die if the water becomes too hot, too cold, or changes temperature too suddenly. This is why care is needed when transferring fish into a new aquarium – so that they have sufficient time to adapt to the temperature of their new surroundings.

**Q) Why don't electric eels electrocute themselves?**  
**A)** The reasons for electric eels' immunity to their shocks are not fully understood. Electric eels produce a current that runs from tail to head in the fish and in the opposite direction in the surrounding water. It is thought that they are protected from a short circuit by the insulating properties of their skin and the tissue surrounding the nerves. But it has been observed that if their skin is broken, the fish do show signs of distress from the effects of their own electric discharge.

**Q) Why do you get a headache between your eyes at the top of your nose when you drink something cold?**  
**A)** All headaches are essentially caused by changes in blood flow in the head. As blood vessels open up and close they can trigger pain receptors. Headaches induced by eating something cold are officially called ice-cream headaches. When you eat something, cold blood rushes to the cold area to heat it up. To warm your mouth blood is diverted from the forehead and as the blood vessels there swell up, they trigger the pain receptors – giving a sharp pain at the top of the nose.

**Q) Why are there only two sexes?**  
**A)** The presence of two sexes in a population is the most evolutionary stable of all systems. Three possible sexes would soon be reduced to two if a mutation occurred in one of them, allowing it to reproduce with only one of the others. The third sex would then die out. Quite why there are two sexes and not one is still a mystery, but in a changing environment two sexes are better at shuffling the gene

pool to keep one step ahead of the latest disease.

**Q) How much water does a tree drink?**  
**A)** Trees take in water at their roots and then lose it by evaporation through their leaves. A mature deciduous tree is thought to "drink" 50,000 litres of water in a year. On a warm windy day a tree can take up 2,000 litres of water – that's about 6,000 drink cans of fluid a day. It is estimated that 60 per cent of the water falling on a beech wood is returned to the atmosphere through the trees.

**Q) Bird body temperatures are usually around 40 degrees centigrade – but they produce sperm at 35 degrees centigrade, so how do they keep their testes cooler than the body?**  
**A)** They don't! Birds only produce sperm at night when their body temperature drops by about 4-5 degrees centigrade. To stop it overheating the next day, they shunt the sperm into a kind of external lump called the cloacal projection – which outside the body is kept a little cooler at about 4-5 degrees below body temperature.

**Q) Why do we stretch?**  
**A)** There are several hypotheses about why we stretch. Firstly, when we are tired stretching uses muscles that draw the rib cage up and out – allowing the lungs to expand more fully – drawing in more oxygen. Stretching is also often accompanied by yawning, which is another strange phenomenon. No one knows the true reason for yawning – but it could also be to take more oxygen deep into the lungs. When we have just woken up, stretching may also be a way of warming the muscles ready for action by increasing the blood supply to them.



**Q) If you can't get sunburnt through glass – by sitting in a car, for example – how can you get a tan from a sun-bed when the UV lights have glass around them?**  
**A)** Sun-beds have specially designed glass which doesn't have any iron impurities in it. Car windows deliberately have about 0.1 per cent iron in the glass to stop the plastic inside the cars from deteriorating. These metals reflect the UV light frequencies rather than transmitting them through the glass.

CHRISTOPHER REILEY

Questions and answers are provided by Science Line. You can use its Dial-a-scientist service on 0343 600444.



In a forest by a lake lived a creature: the fossil site in East Turkana, northern Kenya, where remains of upright forest-dwelling hominids were found last year. Science Photo Library

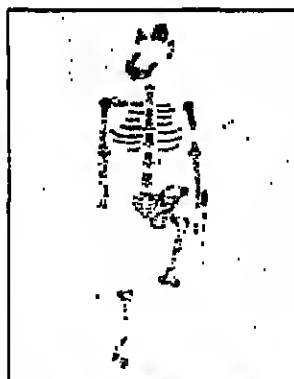
## Did Lucy live in the woods?

Humans may have walked first in the forest, not on the savannah, says Jerome Burne

There are plenty of mysteries about human evolution. Are we all really descended from one pre-human woman? How did we develop the power of speech? Until very recently, though, there was pretty wide agreement about our first step. This was standing upright and walking on two legs, or bipedalism as it's technically known. Look in any relevant textbook and you'll see the secular, triumphant version of the Garden of Eden story. Once, the old theory goes, we were like all the other apes, living in trees in the lush forest, picking fruit from the branches whenever we wanted it. Then came a change in the weather, the forests thinned out and we had to come down from the trees and survive in the harsher, more arid world of the savannah. But being thrown out of Eden was the making of us. We stood upright, we learnt to hunt, our brains grew and we went on to dominate the planet. However, unlike religious myths that are impervious to facts, scientific stories constantly have to earn their keep – and the evidence that once underpinned the savannah story is looking increasingly shaky. "The savannah paradigm has been overthrown," says Philip Tobias, senior palaeoanthropologist at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. "We have to look for some other explanation."

Only three years ago,

palaeontologist Elizabeth Vrba of Yale University was able to confidently declare: "The lineage of upright primates was one of the founding groups of the great African savannah biota [the life of a region or period]." She had found that between about 2.5 and two million years ago – when hominids were starting to use tools – conditions got harsher and forest-living animals disappeared, to be replaced by ones suited to the savannah. Other researchers found similar evidence for global cooling around five million years ago – about the time humans were supposed to be going bipedal. This fitted with the theory that walking upright happened before we started growing our big brains. Key evidence for this came from Lucy, the fossil found 20 years ago, and dated to 3.2 million years ago, who had a chimpanzee-sized brain but already walked upright. It also fitted in with the famous footprints found frozen in volcanic ash at Laetoli, Tanzania – showing an early hominid family walking on two legs 3.5 million years ago. But the theory that this change was climate-driven was looking increasingly shaky. Andrew Hill and John Kingston, also of Yale, looked at carbon isotopes in geological strata in an area of Kenya where many hominid fossils had been uncovered. Plants from arid periods leave different ratios of isotopes from those flourishing in wet soils. They found no evidence for a dramatic shift to



Lucy: the upright woman

grassland. Other new finds also undermined the savannah theory, such as early hominid remains along with pigs whose legs were adapted for life in heavy woods. Ocean-based research found evidence for a cooling in Africa only 2.8 million years ago – far too late to explain Lucy's new gait. Yet more evidence was suggesting that the ground Lucy was covering may not have been that dry after all. The possibility that hominids were walking around upright in

a forested area at least a million years before Lucy came dramatically alive last year when two new sets of fossils were found by Lake Turkana in Kenya. One, known as *Australopithecus anamensis*, was dated to 4.2 million years while the other, *Ardipithecus ramidus*, was estimated at 4.4 million years old. *Anamensis* was walking upright, but according to a co-discoverer, Alan Walker of Penn State University, not exclusively on the savannah. The lake, he says, was much bigger than it is now and was fed by massive rivers that would have supported forests a mile or two wide on either bank. The clincher should be *ramidus*. These hominids definitely lived in dense woods along with monkeys and antelope adapted for forests. But there is an academic cliff-hanger here. The team that found it are refusing to say whether it is bipedal until they have finished a full analysis and that won't be until 1998. If it is bipedal, the savannah story is certainly dead.

The great attraction of the savannah theory, apart from the way it seemed to fit the facts as far as they were known, was that it was a tale of plucky little hominids surviving against the odds. But if our distant ancestors weren't pushed into walking upright we are left with the considerable mystery of why they did it. It's not as if it's a particularly good way of getting about, and osteopaths say our upright gait is the reason why humans generally are so prone to back problems. There is no shortage of theories but they all have problems. One says that it was a development of what some chimps do when they are feeding on the ground – they reach up and pull down branches. Another suggestion is that it comes from chimps' aggression display, when they pull themselves up to full height to scare off an attacker. But that still doesn't answer the question of why we took these occasional behaviours to such an extreme. If the drive wasn't feeding or fighting then perhaps it could be

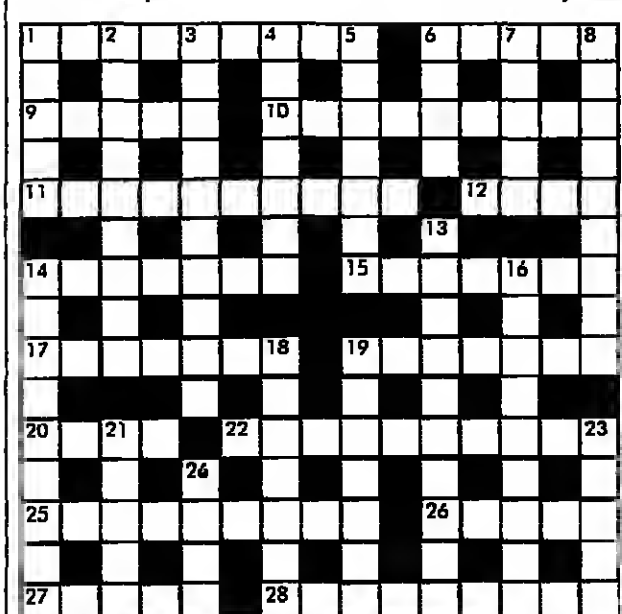
sex, or rather parenting. That's what Owen Lovejoy of Kent State University in Ohio suggests. He believes that what distinguished Lucy and her upright forebears was that dad helped out more with the kids, which would have improved the chances of survival. The paper stayed together and worked a team and in return he more sex.

Instead of just fending himself the male would go foraging and bring back a selection of fruit and vegetables. But to this he had to have his hair free – which walking upright gave him. What this scenario doesn't deal with is that the whole point of the savannah theory is that life was too easy in the forest.

The facts, then, are turning against the savannah scenario. But we also know that scientific theories have a cultural dimension. Perhaps in the face of the looming threat of global warming, we have suddenly become less keen on a theory which is heavily based on the branch effect of climatic change.

### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3111, Monday 7 October



**ACROSS**  
 1 Means of control government put back in place (9)  
 6 Nothing fills greedy duck (5)  
 9 Contradict engineer's story (5)  
 10 Soldiers plan to carry Northern flag (3,6)  
 11 Settle on date and won't be put off (10)  
 12 Record holding European initially expected to give up (4)

**DOWN**  
 1 Bishop seized by attack becomes violent (5)  
 2 Sick of a flirt and is embarrassed (3,2,4)  
 3 Bird coming from the rear was wild (10)  
 4 Publicise railway transport company (7)  
 5 No point going on and on (7)  
 6 Don't start to boast of relative (4)  
 7 Girl in school I've befriended (5)  
 8 Used under gas ring it's not safe (9)  
 13 Surprised European entering container port (6,4)  
 14 Rex trapped in unusually deep cave off the African coast (4,5)  
 16 Stipulation about one's new stock (9)  
 18 Dismiss those at the meeting (4,3)  
 19 Defence committees by the sound of it (7)  
 21 Match of the day (5)  
 23 Willing to go over quarter of woodland area (5)  
 24 Support good sort and vote in favour (4)

**Wordplay (7)**  
 15 Almost despise Greek character's love for stars (7)  
 17 Stop before and check out direction (7)  
 19 It's hardmaking corn circle inside (7)  
 20 Hears of obscure glen (4)  
 22 Basic knowledge about lake fish (10)  
 25 Just hit grouse by accident (9)



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